University of Alberta

# Polkas on the Prairies: Ukrainian Music and the Construction of Identity

by

Brian A. Cherwick ©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in

Ukrainian Folklore and Ethnomusicology

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and
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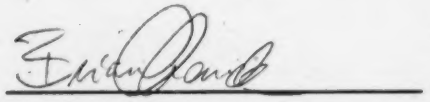

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To Beth and Maria,
and to all the musicians who inspired this journey

# Abstract

This study looks at the activity of Ukrainian polka bands performing in the Canadian prairie provinces, with a specific concentration on one of these groups. These musicians often focus on the construction of their own identities as contemporary musicians and on the roles they play in creating successful dance events. However, through public exposure, the performances of such musicians have come to be viewed by many as fitting representations of Ukrainian music and culture. As links to a cultural past and as catalysts for new ideas and practices, musicians therefore play an active role in forming and re-forming the ethnic identity of contemporary Ukrainian Canadians.

The current state of Ukrainian music has been affected by a number of significant nodes along the historical continuum. These nodes correspond with changes in content, context or medium, at times addressing one, two or all three variables, and tend to coincide with significant processes in Ukrainian Canadian society in general.

This study will present an overview of the activity that occurred at each of these musical nodes: the emergence of commercial recordings of Ukrainian music in the late 1920s; the development of a unique hybrid of Ukrainian country and western music in the 1960s; an increase in ethnic awareness and the development of consciously ethnic music in the 1970s; the rise in popularity in the 1980s of Ukrainian music that incorporated western Canadian rural repertoires with eastern Canadian urban sensibilities and the main context for this type of music, the *zabava*; the continued flourishing of local music making traditions featuring bands that consisted of neighbours or family members; and the influence of the mainstream marketplace of the 1990s on the activities of Ukrainian bands. At the same time, it will consider the current activity of the Edmonton band "Charka," discussing the way that the historical past shapes their ethnographic present.

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# Chapter 1. Introduction

*"You know why I do this? It's the tunes. They get into your blood." Barry Sliwkanich*[1]

Music is part of the lifeblood of the Ukrainian community in western Canada. For Ukrainians, music is a necessity, as an integral part of social rituals. It is even more necessary as a means of escape from the pressures of everyday life. The unique sounds of Ukrainian music help to create a distinct space that can transport the listener to another time and place. That place may be a peasant village in Ukraine or a rural farmstead on the western Canadian Prairies. The place may be a family kitchen where friends gather to sing and play traditional tunes on the fiddle or *tsymbaly*, [2] or a Ukrainian community hall packed with dancers whirling to the beat of a Ukrainian polka band. In a rapidly changing world, music is one of the few threads that can still connect people whose affiliation with Ukrainian culture may be minimal.

A vast network of Ukrainian musicians stretches across the Prairies. While there are no formal structures connecting them, they are inextricably linked through the sound of their music, and the role that music plays in the lives of their audiences. Contexts for performance of Ukrainian music can range from outdoor folk festivals attracting audiences of thousands, to small three-piece "orchestras" playing for dancers at the local Legion hall. In each case, it is the sound of the music, its driving beat and the reactions it elicits that is constant.

The brand of Ukrainian music played on the Canadian Prairies is a unique product of its environment. This music is as much a regional music as it is an ethnic music, with Ukrainian musicians acting as the sole providers of social music for countless rural Canadian communities. This music tells us as much about western Canadian culture as it does about Ukrainian culture. And yet, it is its function as a marker of ethnic identity that gives it much of its power, and attracts new generations of musicians into the fold.

The scope of musical activity among Ukrainians in western Canada continues to be vast. Even focusing on one kind of music making, that of instrumental dance bands, leaves us numerous avenues of investigation. Ukrainians support not only their local amateur week-end musicians, but a system of established "stars" and events that range from small community dances and weddings to mega-"zabavas" [dances][3] held in hockey arenas and convention centres. Music continues to be passed on orally from generation to generation, yet Ukrainian Canadians have also established an entire recording industry consisting of several competing labels and broadcasters who play these products. Individual factions of the community have fostered genres that satisfy their own tastes, ritual songs and village dance music, and new genres that owe as much to urban dance, swing, country and rock music as they do to the old country tunes. For Ukrainians in western Canada in the 1990s, all of these diverse components are intermingling to create a new, homogenous yet exciting brand of Ukrainian music that Ukrainian Canadians can relate to. My goal in this work is to inform the reader of several of these unique branches of Ukrainian music, and inform them as to how they currently interconnect. The result will be a "study of a community as a musical system involving both the musical artifacts and the behaviour of music producers and consumers" (Nettl 1978, 14).

As immigrant communities establish themselves within new environments, they experience conflict between strict retention of traditions as they existed in their previous homelands and adaptation of these traditions to fit the norms of their new environments. Since the arrival of the first permanent Ukrainian settlers in the 1890s, life in the Ukrainian communities of western Canada has undergone considerable change. While some elements of traditional culture have survived, others have either been transformed or discarded completely as a result of influences from outside the community. This process is reflected in the activities of instrumental music ensembles or orchestras.

This study will enable us to address the crucial question of both Canadian and Ukrainian-Canadian identity. With a revival of interest in cultural identity, Canadians of

Ukrainian descent are recomposing a generic Ukrainian culture based on a variety of regional traditions. The result is a synthetic, yet uniquely Canadian version of Ukrainian culture which is as creative as the old country models on which it is based, yet reflects the present time frame and living conditions of Ukrainians in Canada. This model could be used to understand other ethnic cultures or the development of a general Canadian culture based on the interactive dynamic of its immigrant communities.

Music has become a symbol of ethnic identity for Ukrainian Canadians who, while socialized into the culture of the general Canadian society, still identify with the culture of their ancestors. Links to their heritage are established by individual musicians and ensembles, who select for use in performance cultural items that are considered to be significant identifiers of Ukrainian culture, musical genres and the instruments they are played on. In their music making however, contemporary musicians incorporate musical practices and cultural information inspired by and reflecting mainstream Canadian society.

This study will look at the activity of Ukrainian polka bands performing in the Canadian prairie provinces, with a specific concentration on one of these groups. These musicians are often focused on the construction of their own identities as contemporary musicians and on the roles they play in creating successful dance events. However, through public exposure, the performances of such musicians have come to be viewed by many as fitting representations of Ukrainian music and culture. As links to a cultural past and as catalysts for new ideas and practices, musicians therefore play an active role in forming and re-forming the ethnic identity of contemporary Ukrainian Canadians.

***Community***

Although this is a study of music within a specific community, there is some question as to the parameters determining membership within that community. This a problem which has affected many social scientists. Freie (1998), in an attempt to arrive at a definition of community, found that in 1955 one author identified ninety-four different definitions of the term used in social science studies (Hillery 1955), and a similar degree of non-uniformity was reported twenty-two years later (Willis 1977).

According to Freie,"there is some sense of consensus both on values, beliefs and mores of the community as well as on the boundaries, psychological as well as physical" (1998, 28). He suggests that there exists "an awareness among members that they are part of the community" (1998, 28), that individuals experience "a sense of rootedness" (1998, 29), and that they "find identity through participation in a greater whole" (1998, 32). Ehrenhalt views community as a "network of comfortable, reliable relationships"(1998, 93), while Macdonald defines community as a group who "share a common set of characteristics based upon a common experience" (1997, 197).

In order to arrive at the criteria for what I will refer to as the "Ukrainian community in Canada," I also believe it is necessary to focus on the psychological boundaries which encompass the group. Like Macdonald, I chose to view community "not as an analytical unit but to look at it as a field to be investigated; and, like 'tradition', to show it as created within a modern dialogue" (1997, 9). I use the term "Ukrainian community" not as "the boundaries and limits of my investigation but the position from which to begin, and through which to focus the discussion" (cf. Macdonald 1997, 9).

For the purposes of this study, the term "Ukrainian community" may actually refer to two groups of people. On one hand, the term may refer to a group with very clear boundaries. The members of this group are immigrants from Ukraine or direct descendants of those immigrants; they take an active role in organized activities with other individuals of Ukrainian descent; they continue to use the Ukrainian language and make a conscious effort

to maintain Ukrainian ritual and social practices. While these and other criteria could be used to define what might be termed the "official" Ukrainian community in Canada, it excludes many who are part of a "symbolic" Ukrainian Canadian community. The members of this group also have biological connection to ancestors from Ukraine, and may be participants in some level of Ukrainian activity. However, while they may no longer be speakers of the Ukrainian language, members of Ukrainian organizations or participants in Ukrainian ritual and social practices, they continue to have a psychological connection to other Ukrainian Canadians. This connection frequently manifests itself in the selection of symbols which link the individual to the community (Isajiw 1984; Pohorecky 1984). Music, especially the kind of music played for dancing at social functions, is often one of the external cultural symbols which contin[illegible] have a consolidating effect for Ukrainian Canadians long after such symbols as language, values and belief systems cease to be centrally important.

An additional factor influencing the composition of the Ukrainian community in Canada is the role of technology. While the breakdown of traditional practices and physical separation due to geography threatened certain cultural practices, technological developments, such as the introduction of commercial sound recordings (and later radio and television broadcasting) helped to create links and provide some of the "common experiences" that would maintain a sense of community solidarity (cf. Schambra 1998, 45).

***Ethnicity***

Within the context of North American society, many ethnic groups strive to develop their ethnicity. For immigrant communities establishing themselves in new environments,"ethnicity provides a source of identity and meaning within a modern, changing and complex society" (Elliot and Fleras 1992, 129). Some believe, however, that that the encouragement of ethnicity through the policy of multiculturalism simply reinforces

token or symbolic pluralism and is limited in its ability to change race and ethnic relations (Li 1983, 132-133). The Ukrainian community throughout Canada has developed a network of organizations which strive to provide both an ethnic environment in which its members can function comfortably, and an ethnic image that can be presented to the rest of the North American population. The activity of Ukrainian musical ensembles can be viewed as a microcosm of the Ukrainian ethnic experience.

Michael Fischer says,"The ethnic, the ethnographer, and the cross-cultural scholar in general often begin with a personal empathetic "dual tracking," seeking in the other clarification for processes in the self" (1986, 199). As I began this study, I was convinced that ethnicity was an important factor motivating the activity of Ukrainian musicians. Certainly the fact that they considered themselves "Ukrainian" musicians pointed to the importance of ethnicity and identity. This was also an important factor informing my own development as a musician and an ethnographer.

I felt that it was necessary to undergo an overview of ethnicity as it is dealt with in several disciplines. As I did so, I encountered a variety of theories. As I worked through each theory, I constantly found myself falling into and out of the patterns outlined. Ethnicity and ethnic identity is a powerful force. It has shaped both my own choices, and those of the musicians I have worked with in this study.

In its simplest definition, ethnicity and ethnic groups can be seen as "extensions of Old World cultures transplanted to the New World" (Li 1990, 4).Ukrainian Canadian sociologist Wsevolod Isajiw (1975) has identified over seventy elements used in defining ethnicity, of which ancestry, culture, religion, race and language are mentioned most often. Leo Driedger suggests that there are six components involved in the identification of ethnicity,"ecological territory, ethnic culture, ethnic institutions, historical symbols, ideology, and charismatic leadership" (1978, 9-22). Milton Yinger (1994, 3-4) identifies an ethnic group when it is perceived by others in society to be different in some combination of language, religion, race, and ancestral homeland with its related culture, when the

members also perceive themselves as different, and they participate in shared activities built around their (real or mythical) common origin and culture. Measured by these three criteria, Yinger asserts that individuals can fall anywhere in a range from fully ethnic or barely ethnic. In fact, ethnicity may mean something different to each generation. However, one of its most salient features remains the fact that it seeks to link images of a distant past with the present (Isajiw 1982; Wilson and Frederiksen 1995, 4).

In an attempt to define ethnicity, one can contrast two opposing approaches, objective and subjective. In the objective approach, ethnic groups are assumed to be existing as real phenomena. This view assumes that an ethnic group is a segment of a larger society whose members have a common origin, share important aspects of a common culture and participate in shared activities in which the common origin and culture are significant ingredients (Yinger 1994, 3).

Within an objective framework, an ethnic group could be defined as "an involuntary group of people who share the same culture or the descendants of such people who identify themselves and/or are identified by others as belonging to the same involuntary group" (Isajiw 1975, 25), whose characteristics are "neither duplicated nor resembled in another group, even if some other attributes are the same or similar" (Isajiw 1980, v-ix), or "people who conceive of themselves as being of a kind . . . united by emotional bonds and concerned with the preservation of their type" (Shibutani and Kwan 1965, 40). In fact, being from an ethnic cultural environment may well affect "aspirations, behaviour, and achievement regardless of whether one identifies with the ethnic group" (Keely 1986, 152). One of the disadvantages of this kind of view of ethnicity is that it presents the individual as a passive conduit for the collective past, disregarding the individual's ability to choose (Alter, 1979, 191).

A subjective approach, on the other hand, defines ethnicity as a process by which individuals either identify themselves as being different from others or belonging to a different group, are identified as different by others, or both identify themselves and are

identified by others as different (Yinger 1994). According to Fredrik Barth,"the features which are taken into account are not the sum of "objective" difference, but only those which the actors themselves regard as significant." As Barth states,"the critical focus of investigation from this point of view becomes the ethnic boundary that defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses" (Barth 1969, 12).

Isajiw also feels that ethnicity is a matter of boundary, or in fact a double boundary, both "from within, maintained by the socialization process, and a boundary from without, established by the process of intergroup relations" (1975, 24-25). A subjective approach, according to Isajiw, has an advantage over an objective approach in that by focusing on psychological identity it makes it much easier for the definition to embrace the second or third ethnic generation than would a definition emphasizing the observed sharing of culture or other attributes (1979, 12). Persons of the second, third or even fourth immigrant generations in North America may have gone through the process of socialization within the larger society rather than an ethnic subsociety, and, as a result, may not share the same culture as their ancestors, or even their contemporaries who have been socialized into their ethnic group. Nevertheless, they may have retained or even developed to a higher degree a subjective identity with their ethnic group (1979, 22).

Another point in the discussion of ethnic identity must take into account the way a community evolves over time. Often the developments that take place in a community removed from its traditional homeland bring about profound changes. As Glazer and Moynihan point out, various ethnic groups, owing to their distinctive historical experiences, their cultures and skills, the times of their arrival and the economic situation they met, develop distinctive economic, political, and cultural patterns. As their old models of culture fall away they acquire new ones, shaped by the distinctive experiences of life in the new environment, and a new identity is created. Often the new identity has little resemblance to that of the country of origin. While the Italian-Americans in Glazer and Moynihan's study might share little with Italians in Italy, in America they are a distinctive

group that has maintained itself, is identifiable, and gives something to those who are identified with it (1970, xxxiii). In fact, as ethnic groups evolve they are linked to other members of the group by new attributes that the original immigrants would never have recognized as identifying their group (Glazer and Moynihan 1963, vi).

Much the same could be said of Ukrainians in Canada. Add to this the fact that the Ukrainian Canadian community experienced long periods of isolation from the homeland culture for either economic or political reasons, and the result is an environment that was ripe for the development of a unique form of Ukrainian identity.

Of the roughly 800, 000 Ukrainians in Canada, Magosci identifies two distinct groups. The first, while of Ukrainian descent, are Canadian first and foremost. Their family ties, education and world view are determined by parameters of Canadian society. They may or may not speak Ukrainian, or attend an Eastern Christian Church, and, by and large, have no interest or merely a passing concern with events in Ukraine or Ukrainian communities outside of Ukraine. This group, which makes up three quarters of "Ukrainians" in Canada, are "simply Canadians who, like all [sic] Canadians, have parents or grandparents who came from somewhere else." That somewhere else happens to be Ukraine (Magosci 1991, xii).

Magosci defines the second group as Ukrainians living in Canada. This group consists of individuals born both in Canada and in the old country. However, they are Ukrainian first and foremost. They prefer to speak Ukrainian, or consider it their mother tongue, attend an Eastern Christian Church, whether or not they are believers, and follow with great concern the fate of Ukraine and participate in activities of the Ukrainian diaspora. This group is torn between what is natural, functioning as indistinguishable members of Canadian host environment, and what has become an intellectualized reality, struggling to be a Ukrainian in a non-Ukrainian world. It is this group that is most often the subject of scholars researching the Ukrainian-Canadian experience and the main concern of the

Canadian political world, primarily because they can be easily identified by scholars and politicians.

During the period of Soviet rule in Ukraine, this second group could find a focus for their activity as preservers of a culture that was threatened in the homeland. However, with Ukraine's recent independence, this focus itself is now threatened. Although Magosci suggests that there will no longer be any need to be a Ukrainian living in Canada, he fails to explain how similar conditions exist with other ethnic groups have enjoyed unrestricted access to their homeland.

## *Tradition*

The concepts of ethnicity and culture, especially when speaking about Ukrainian music, are often linked with the term tradition (for example, 'traditional music'). While there is a tendency to view tradition as a static and predetermined set of variations, it is much more effective to look at it as an interpretive process. Traditions are always in constant reinvention or reinterpretation (Handler and Linnekin 1984).

For members of an ethnic community in search of suitable cultural umbrellas, old symbols are frequently transformed or new traditions are invented (Sommers 1991, 35). This process led to the development of the concept of "invented tradition." The term includes both 'traditions' "actually invented, constructed and formally instituted and those emerging in a less easily traceable manner within a brief and dateable time period . . .and establishing themselves with great rapidity" (Hobsbawm 1983, 1). For Hobsbawm, the focus of any traditions, including invented ones, is invariance. It is fixed or formalized practices, such as repetition that identify a routine as tradition (Hobsbawm 1983, 2).

The cultural objectification of invented traditions often leads to a standard that is imagined to be a group's culture (Handler 1988, 11). For Ukrainians in Canada, this can have important implications. Some traditions take on an added level of significance because of their symbolic nature. For example, customs rooted in the agricultural practices of the

past take on a heightened significance and reflect Ukrainian identity, especially for urbanized community members, because of their implied symbolic nature. Roosens notes a similar pattern whereby the Flemish in Brussels become more "consciously" Flemish than their compatriots in west Flanders or Limburg (1989, 12). While such patterns can be beneficial for developing and maintaining cultural practices, the result is that selective tradition is often passed off as *the* tradition (Williams 1991, 414).

In many instances it is ethnic revivalists, or those who have a renewed interest in a culture, who are most concerned with adherence to traditions. Often their centre of attention is not unlike that of museum curators, focusing on "conservation, preservation, [and] restoration. But a living tradition is not like a painting; it needs to be changed and touched by each new generation" (Sennett 1979, 199).

Henry Glassie has identified two main causes for the search for identity in traditions. According to Glassie,

> The first is the erosion of mediating structures. As communal, ethnic, regional, or religious identity is drained of pragmatic significance, it is filled with compensatory symbolic significance. The second is the decline in society from creation to consumption. As people lose existential authenticity, the product of direct creative activity, they construct dainty, friable selves, selves so fragile that everyone takes everything personally. . . (1994, 240)

Another way to look at traditions is to analyze them as texts. Clifford Geertz believes any cultural forms, including traditions, invented or otherwise," can be treated as texts, as imaginative works built out of social materials" (Geertz 1973, 449). These traditions or texts can help provide access into a community.

Since Canadian social conditions offer a vast playing field for practicing ethnicity and its traditions, ethnicity appears to have a relatively high salience in Canada (Reitz and Breton 1994, 47). This could account for the high profile for activity among ethnic groups, such as the Ukrainians, within the framework of mainstream Canadian culture. While studies show that attachment to ethnic communities is usually more pronounced among immigrants than among their descendants (Lieberson and Waters 1988; Reitz 1990), this does not appear to be the case for groups such as the Ukrainians. Indeed, even without any

significant immigration of Ukrainians between the early 1950s and the late 1980s, Ukrainian cultural items have remained among the most visible in Canada. This may partly be due to the fact that Ukrainians felt an obligation to maintain traditions that they perceived as threatened under Soviet rule in their former homeland. However, some scholars feel that with the recent independence of Ukraine,"this may become a time when Ukrainian Canadians will retain a sense of their heritage not because it is ostensibly or actually threatened in the homeland but because it is simply another aspect of being Canadian" (Luciuk and Hryniuk 1991, xiv).

***Ethnicity and Music***

Music can be a powerful tool in the negotiation of ethnicity. It provides a means by which people recognize identities and places, and the boundaries which separate them, transcending the limitations of their place in the world (Stokes 1994). It can also provide a concrete vehicle through which the identity of a group of people is expressed (Flores 1992). Music can also be used to construct boundaries, to maintain distinctions between "us" and "them," with terms such as "authenticity" often used to justify these boundaries. While much of this boundary and identity construction is based on group "traditions," individual musicians command a powerful control over their materials. This control is evidenced "by the common practice of shifting from one form of music to another for such reasons as in-group (secret) communication, appropriateness, or redefinition of a social situation — practices that may be considered examples of musical code switching" (Hopkins 1976, 461-462).

Malcolm Chapman discusses ethnicity as it relates to "Celtic" culture and music. Chapman underlines two important points.

> Firstly there is often a great gulf between the real representatives of an 'ethnicity' (the man and woman in the street, so to speak), and the self-conscious and enthusiastic exponents of the same 'ethnicity.' This is manifest as much in musical as it is in other matters. Secondly, music provides an entry into the practices and

> sentiments of ethnic belonging, for those whose commitment is small, and who require entertainment rather than effort. (1994, 35-36)

Chapman (1994) also identifies four main processes in the creation of "ethnic" music, 1) the elaboration of an opposition 'self/other'; 2) the steady progression of fashions from a centre to a periphery; 3) the meeting of incongruent category systems, causing the perceiving culture to construct the perceived as inconsistent, unreliable, irrational, colourful, dramatic, etc.; 4) Romanticism which glamorizes the 'other.'

Some ethnic identities have to be achieved, and they have to be maintained by ethnic "signaling." Lack of knowledge or inability to signal properly can mean that identity can be challenged (Yinger 1994, 141-42). For many Ukrainians in Canada, music allows an access to a Ukrainian culture and community that would otherwise be denied to them by the complexities of Ukrainian language, traditional social patterns or involvement in community politics (cf. Stokes 1994). Artists, including musicians, are important sources of the symbols that signal one's identity (Yinger 1994, 141), helping individuals create a personal space apart from that of the cultural mainstream. As Frith states,"Music seems to be a key to identity because it offers, so intensely, a sense of both self and others, of the subjective in the collective" (1996, 110).

***Identity***

Ethnicity is frequently used as a powerful tool in the development of identity. Indeed, the construction or maintenance of a distinct identity is often one of the main goals of ethnic groups. For some "Being ethnic makes them feel unique and special and not just 'vanilla, '" (Waters 1990, 151). Assuming an ethnic identity is "an insistence on a pluralist, multidimensional, or multi-faceted concept of self, one can be many different things, and this personal sense can be a crucible for a wider social ethos of pluralism" (Fischer 1986, 196). However, we can extend the concept of identity to include members of any group,

musicians for example, or to any individual. It is possible to examine various types of identity.

A distinction can be made between behavioural and symbolic ethnic identity. Behavioural ethnic identity consists of " outward expressions, such as being able to speak a heritage language and use it frequently, choosing best friends primarily from one's own group, practicing endogamy, and belonging to ethnic and/or religious organizations of one's group" (Kallin and Berry 1994, 306). Symbolic ethnic identity involves knowledge and pride in one's origin, but does not necessarily include behavioural expression of that identity (Gans 1979).

Oring (1994) contrasts concepts of *individual identity* (sense of space-time connections with states, thoughts and actions from the past), *personal identity* (particular mental dispositions and contents — shaped from experiences that are unique to the individual as well as from those common to a collection of individuals), and *collective identity* (those aspects of personal identity that are derived from experiences and expressions common to a group). Peressini (1991) groups similar concepts together to create "social identity," whereby identity is the product of social relations and practices, or the product of a society and a culture, and implies a possibility of multiplicity. Several social identities may be held simultaneously or successively by one individual. Yinger (1994, 366) identifies a social identity theory which explores the way group memberships shape identity choices, seeking to maintain or increase the salience of the group and to give it a positive quality. For Ukrainian musicians, movement between these various levels of identity is a natural part of the process of functioning in a variety of milieus.

According to Reitz, language maintenance is a necessary condition for the maintenance of ethnic identity (1990, 248). Reitz and Breton consider it one of five dimensions, along with salience of ethnicity, intermarriage, multiple origins or mixed ancestry, and ethnic social interaction and activities, required for the maintenance of identities and culture (Reitz and Breton 1994, 41). Weinfeld also points out, for example,

that "the French language has emerged in the post-war period as the foundation and indeed the essence of Québécois culture." He also notes

> Language loss may in any way reflect, rather than cause, a loss of ethnic ties and cohesion over the generation. On the other hand, the selective and symbolic use of language - curse words, foods, songs, first names and family names, jokes - may serve as signifiers and markers which reinforce identity, associated with important ritualistic or life cycle events. Moreover, ethnic and/or non-English words have been incorporated regularly into contemporary spoken English. (1985, 243)

While ethnic identity is generally looked upon as a positive tool for groups to secure a place in the framework of society, there are suggestions that the dominant culture encourages ethnic groups to retain their cultural identities as part of a strategy of continued hegemony. Porter developed the concept of vertical mosaic with the vertical strata of status, prestige and power. According to this theory, Canada adopted a policy of multiculturalism because the "melting pot with its radical breakdown of national ties and old forms of stratification would have endangered the conservative tradition of Canadian life, a tradition which gives ideological support to the continued high status of the British charter group" (Porter 1965, 71). Reitz and Breton feel that as groups retain their traditional culture they also retain traditional subordinate status (1994, 15). In contrast, a high level of education could support the contention that ethnic and upper middle class identification could be mutually supportive (Wolowyna 1980).

Village culture, especially music and dance, is often used as an emblem of national culture (Dubinskas 1983, 33). As Glazer states,

> . . . the word "culture" cannot be restricted only to the arts. It also means the way of life, the customs, the language - or if the language goes the accent - the food, the stories, the weddings, the knowledge of how to approach a person on the street or how to address someone, and the comfortable expectation that one will oneself be approached and addressed in the same way. (1979, 203)

Royce observes that "Adequate performance in an identity is much more rigorously judged within a group than it is by outsiders. For the latter, a few tokens of the identity are usually sufficient" (1982, 187).

Often the process of arriving at an identity through ethnicity is an important factor in defining that identity. Simon Frith supposes that identity rests on two premises,"first, that

identity is *mobile*, a process not a thing, a becoming not a being; second, that our experience of music - of music making and music listening - is best understood as an experience of this *self-in-process*" (1996, 109). Michael Fischer develops this idea when he states

> Ethnicity is not something that is simply passed on from generation to generation, taught and learned; it is something dynamic, often unsuccessfully repressed or avoided. It can be potent even when not consciously taught; it is something that institutionalized teaching easily makes chauvinist, sterile, and superficial, something that emerges in full - often liberating - flower only through struggle. Insofar as ethnicity is a deeply rooted emotional component of identity, it is often transmitted less through cognitive language or learning (to which sociology has almost entirely restricted itself) than through processes analogous to the dreaming and transference of psycho-analytic encounters. (1986, 195-6)

For Ukrainians in Canada, their cultural identity as Ukrainians is a product of the North American experience. Prior to their arrival in Canada, most were not nationally conscious and did not think of themselves as Ukrainians, but rather referred to identities based on regional, village or kinship bonds (Woycenko 1967, 22). Often it was the immigration situation that taught them they were ethnic. Michael Novak states,"Usually the immigrants came without ethnic organization or plan. Language and "network feelings" drove them to seek their own kind, to group together, to acquire self-awareness" (1979b, 80).

***Processes in Folklore Studies***

The establishment of identity can be viewed as a process, and there are branches of folklore scholarship that investigate processes. Although some folklorists tend to focus on the historical past, others are more concerned with the social and cultural processes of the present (Abrahams 1983, 345). And while traditional studies focused primarily on texts, Alan Dundes insists that a well-rounded folklorist should attempt to analyze folk practices on three levels (texture, which is its linguistic features; text, which is a single telling of a tale or proverb, singing of a folksong or other traditional performance; and context, which is the specific social situation in which that particular item is actually employed), rather than leaving the texture to linguists and the context to cultural anthropologists (1978, 22-37).

Some folklore studies also focus on authenticity as an aspect shaping identity. At one time processes of "imagined tradition" were branded as "fakelore" (Dorson 1972, 1976). Dundes, however, suggests that perhaps items of so-called fakelore should be considered an integral element of culture just as folklore is (Dundes 1989, 40-56). Soviet scholars have also had problems with the concept of authenticity. While grounded in structuralism and Marxism, it appears that Soviet scholarship adheres to the notion that some examples of folklore, or folklorismus, like the previously mentioned fakelore, can be considered less authentic than other examples (Gusev 1973). According to Middleton, the concept of authenticity assumes that one group of lore is corrupt, manipulated, over-complex, mechanical and commodified, while another is more natural, spontaneous, and traditional (1990, 168-169).

***Media as a Tool for Developing Identity***

Another way to envision the Ukrainian community of Western Canada is as a sub-society. According to Milton Gordon (1964), there are four factors which combine to form sub-society, ethnic group (race, religion, national origin), social class, rural or urban residence and regional residence. While there is no one singular model of "Ukrainian Canadian" that would adhere to identical parameters of each of the preceding categories, there are enough similarities which help construct the web that is Ukrainian Canadian.

While music has long functioned as a communicative tool among Ukrainians, another tool which has helped develop both a community of musicians, and an ethnic community in general for Ukrainians has been the mass media. Early audio recordings helped bridge the gap between old and new world as well as to unite Ukrainians across North America with a common cultural experience. Later, radio also played an important role in creating community cohesion.

While media and related items of culture are generally viewed as products of a group, Bohlman submits that an alternate view could be that "the group is the product of its

musical activities and the cultural values bound to them" (1991, 266). Frith also suggests "not that social groups agree on values which are then expressed in their cultural activities (the assumption of the homology models) but that they only get to know themselves *as groups* (as a particular organization of individual and social interests, of sameness and difference) *through* cultural activity, through aesthetic judgment" (1996, 111). Waterman proposes that "the role of musical style in the enactment of identity makes it not merely a reflexive but also a potentially *constitutive* factor in the patterning of cultural values and social interaction" (1990, 66).

Ethnic media play an important role in ethnic identity retention, helping individuals stay informed about community events and activities, molding public opinion and attitudes within the community, and reinforcing ethnic symbolism. Partaking of ethnic media is not only a means of retaining other ethnic patterns, but is an ethnic pattern in its own right (Fleras 1994, 267-68; Isajiw 1981, 31).

Wilensky (1964) identifies mass culture as cultural products manufactured solely for the mass market, while folk culture is seen as the traditional culture of the people predominant in rural society. As some critics see it "there is a tendency for the culture purveyed by the mass media to destroy both traditional high culture and folk culture" (Vulliamy 1977, 180). Hermann Bausinger's mass-cultural theory rejects this conservative viewpoint, proposing a theory of expansion rather than disintegration of traditional culture in modern technology (1990, 22-25).

One of the classic definitions of folklore focuses on the oral transmission of cultural material, often from master to student. With the aid of some media, like recorded sound, the "master" is available in the grooves. Music-making can emerge from "obsessive listening" (Frith 1996, 55). A new kind of "mediated" musical experience evolves (Keil 1984), and a musical community can emerge without immediate personal interaction.

***Ukrainian Musical Folklore***

In order to establish a foundation for the discussion of Ukrainian music in Canada, it is necessary to look at musical traditions as they existed in Ukraine. Studies dating from the 19th and early 20th centuries are most substantial.

This material includes an extremely large body of literature dealing with blind village musicians known as the kobzari and lirnyky.[4] While their activity formed an important part of village musical life, it is the musicians who provided music for dancing at community events who are the forerunners of the Canadian Ukrainian dance band musicians. There is a somewhat smaller body of information about such musicians.

Ukrainian scholars in the early part of the 20th century were at the forefront of research in traditional music, however their studies were focused on a specific range of topics (Elschek 1991; Noll 1997). Physical descriptions of instruments and brief discussion of performance practices can be found in general surveys of musical instruments (Lysenko 1950; Khotkevych 1929; Humeniuk 1967; Vertkov et al 1963). Regional ethnomusicological or ethnographic surveys also provide descriptions of the role of instruments and musicians, some complete with detailed musical transcriptions (Mierczynski 1965; Shukhevych 1902).

Contemporary scholars have begun to re-examine the role of village musicians. William Noll has examined village musical ensembles (1988), systems of patronage (1991a), musical institutions (1991b), and the role of blind minstrels (1991c, 1993a, 1993b). Natalie Kononenko has also conducted in-depth studies of the minstrel genre (1992, 1998). Some current research has begun to deal with the music of bands in popular genres in the post-Soviet period (Bahry 1994; Wanner 1996).

The earliest work in the field of Ukrainian folk music in Canada was done in the 1940s by Tatiana Koshetz, who collected and prepared transcriptions of folk songs sung by Ukrainian Canadians (Peacock 1963).[5] Laura Boulton presented the results of her research on Ukrainian Canadian music both on film (1943) and on audio recording (1956).

In the 1950s, Jaroslaw Rudnyc'kyj (1956, 1958, 1988) also collected folk songs, with analyses focusing on texts rather than musical content.

During the 1960s Robert B. Klymasz conducted extensive field research among Ukrainians in western Canada. The results of his work include several works dealing with musical themes. While many focus on folk song, with a primary focus on the texts of those pieces (1970a, 1970b, 1973, 1988, 1989), others deal with musical processes and contexts (1976, 1982, 1988, 1992). Of central importance to this work are his discussions of the country music phenomenon in the 1960s (1972, 1980) and the ongoing effect that commercial recordings have on community music making (1984).

Klymasz identified the "underground army of tsymbaly (dulcimer) players on the Prairies" (1982, 284) as one of the Ukrainian community's most active areas of music making. This phenomenon has been dealt with in terms of instrument building in Alberta (Bandera 1991), music contests (Bandera 1983), and diachronic changes in repertoire and performance practices over several generations (Cherwick 1992, 1995).

Additional studies have dealt with other aspects of music within the Ukrainian community. Bassa (1955) focuses primarily on art music, but does deal with the activity of choirs at the community level. Proracki and Henderson (1974) conducted a brief survey of Ukrainian music in the Waterford area of Ontario. Zajcew (1984) offers an overview of Ukrainian popular music in Canada, which includes the activities of dance bands, especially those active in the Montreal scene of the 1970s. Claudette Bertiaume-Zavada has done important work documenting the current state of music-making among Ukrainians in Montreal (1989, 1994).

In addition to these specific musical discussions, valuable sources of descriptive information about Ukrainian folk music in Canada can be found in articles contained in local community history books. Many articles describe events such as church holidays, weddings, anniversaries and community dances, and often include descriptions and photographs of musicians their activities.[6]

***Ethnomusicology***

This study is informed by several streams of research in the field of ethnomusicology. While some focus on theoretical concepts, others provide more concrete applications of concepts based on specific ethnographic data. Of the numerous theories and even more ethnographic descriptions, a few directly reflect the approach taken in this study.

A common method in ethnomusicological study follows Clifford Geertz's model of interpretive anthropology (1973). Using this paradigm, ethnomusicologists "have analyzed musical performance as an expressive activity that communicates social meanings, and as a realm within which a community's fundamental values are evoked and confirmed" (Sugarman 1997, 24).

Sugarman recognizes two distinct types of analysis within this paradigm. The first postulates structural homologies suggesting that something in the music's structure is logically consistent with central patterns of thinking and behaving within the culture. Homology deals with the way in which every aspect of culture is consistent. It is "concerned with how far in their structure and content, particular items reflect the structure, style, typical concerns, attitudes and feelings of the social group," and involves the continuous play between a group and a particular item, such as music, which produces specific styles, meanings, contents and forms of consciousness (Willis 1978, 191). The second approach focuses on music making by group members with recognition of links between musical and non-music activity (Feld 1982; Roseman 1991). Some recent studies combine both approaches (Seeger 1987; Waterman 1990; Rice 1994).

Recent studies of polka music in the United States deal closely with material that directly affects the production of Ukrainian music in Canada. Two contrasting views of the Polka scene in the mid-western States can be seen in works by Greene (1992) and Keil et al. (1992). While Greene provides a historical overview of the development of the polka genre, focusing on the fact that eastern and central European music had a profound

influence on the shaping of American popular music up to the middle of this century, Keil, on the other hand, looks at how the symbolic importance of the polka genre increases as its community support declines, and at its role as a community building tool, offering resistance to mainstream culture. Both approaches can be applied to the current study of Ukrainian music. March, in his review of these works (1995), suggests that in some parts of Wisconsin, the polka scene has become significant as a regional and not necessarily ethnic tradition. The same can be said of Ukrainian music in some rural areas of western Canada. Savaglio has looked at polka music as a musical self-representation of Polish-Americans, discussing how this group uses music to construct simultaneous Polish and American identities (1996).

The role of popular musics and their effect on traditional music has received increased attention. Peter Manuel deals with popular music and its effect on non-western cultures, looking at the role of music and mass media along with processes such as urbanization and acculturation and their consequent effects on national identity (1988). Lipsitz (1994) discusses how immigrant populations construct identities by making music that combines their own experiences with those of the mainstream cultures where they have come to reside, resulting in inter-ethnic fusions. Guilbault (1993) also looks at the effects of interaction between local and global practices.

The development of regional music styles also has parallels with Ukrainian music on the Canadian prairies. Studies of the music of Spanish bands in Los Angeles (Loza 1993), Mexicans in Texas (Peña 1985), and Cajuns in Louisiana (Ancelet 1984) discuss processes within these communities, including traditional and contemporary performance contexts and the development of local media and recording networks, similar to those among Ukrainians. Turino (1993) discusses the effect of transplanting of rural musical genres to urban locations. Finnegan (1990), provides a look at a range of different kinds of music-making within a single community. Slobin (1993) analyzes the importance of a broad range of such localized "micro musics."

The role of media, especially sound recording, is an important part of the study of ethnomusicology (Shelemay 1991). While recording technology comprises one of the central tools of the discipline (Nettl 1964, 16-17; Keil 1984, 91), discussions of commercial recording have taken an increasingly important role (Gronow 1975, 1982; Manuel 1993 ; Spottswood 1982, 1990; Wallis and Malm 1984).

***Webs of Interaction***

As I began to connect the various parts of this study, I realized that they were linked more and more in a web-like fashion. Even though I had chosen to follow a linear time line, the diverse parts did not always follow linearly. Not only did I discover web-like connections between the musicians with whom I had spoken, but the web extended to connect the diverse genres and time periods under consideration.

Similar structures are evident in many of the disciplines which have informed and influenced this work. Ethnomusicologist Tim Cooley describes the work that ethnographers do as a "web of histories, personal histories, the histories of our academic field, and the histories of those we study" (1997, 5). Anthropologist Clifford Geertz also refers to culture as "webs of significance" which people spin and in which they are suspended (1975, 5). According to folklorist Richard Baumann, when viewed in context, folklore is situated in a web of interrelationships. These contextual relations can be divided into aspects of cultural context, having to do with systems of meaning and symbolic interrelationships, and social context, having to do with matters of social structure and social interaction (1983).

The web metaphor extended into the writing process. Upon being confronted with diverse data which appeared to be interconnecting at various levels, I struggled with its organization into a linear narrative. While the constraints of this kind of work demand a linear structure, there have been suggestions by some scholars that a hypertext would be a more useful way to present such material. Ethnomusicologist Jeff Todd Titon advocates the

use of a hypertext as a way to make the interconnectedness of musical processes, with their insights and ambiguities, evident to the readers of musical ethnographies. As he quotes,"Whereas a narrative text is a linear read, hypertext can be a web-like structure that allows readers to choose their own paths through the assembled information" (Landow 1992 as cited in Titon 1997). Titon goes on to describe a hypertext presentation he has personally prepared which, depending on the path selected by the reader, illustrates either similarities or differences in a repertoire of fiddle tunes. Perhaps this can provide a future mode of presentation for this assembled collection of Ukrainian musical traditions, and other similar material.

***Methodology: A Web of Ukrainian Music***

I am convinced that the current state of Ukrainian music has been affected by a number of significant nodes along the historical continuum. These nodes correspond with changes in content, context or medium, at times addressing one, two or all three variables. These musical nodes tend to coincide with significant processes in Ukrainian Canadian society in general. The rise in popularity of commercial recordings in the late 1920s coincided with the end of the homestead period and the movement into intensive grain and mixed farming (Isajiw 1982a). The development of Ukrainian country and western music coincided with the transformation of the Ukrainian community from an immigrant to an ethnic culture, as Ukrainians took a more prominent role interacting with mainstream society (Klymasz 1980). The development of consciously ethnic music coincided with public trends focusing on multiculturalism (Fleras and Elliot 1992), ethnicity (Colburn and Pozetta 1979), and political activism (Harasymiw 1982). And the development of urban dance events based on rural models coincided with increased urbanization of the formerly rural population (Driedger 1980).

This study will present an overview of the activity that occurred at each of these musical nodes. At the same time, it will consider the current activity of the Edmonton band

"Charka," discussing the way that the historical past shapes their ethnographic present (Qureshi 1995). I will draw on sources in the fields of folklore, Ukrainian folklore, and ethnomusicology to help further develop this discussion. The work is the result of a balance between ethnographic fieldwork and the incorporation of historic and archival sources (Noll 1997, 163).

According to Michael Agar (1980, 23), ethnography is "not simply 'data collection'; it is rich in implicit theories of culture, society and the individual." This study, while investigating the music of Ukrainians in western Canada, has developed more into a discussion of musicians and the processes they are involved in rather than of the actual musical items they perform. Description of musical items are used when necessary to illustrate significant activity.

Wengle (1988, ix) suggests that the process of fieldwork subjects the ethnographer "to an attack on his or her sense of self." Indeed, I have come to evaluate not only the activities and motivations of musicians within the Ukrainian community, but also my own role in those processes. This study, while focusing on a musical community, is also an "ethnography of self" (Greenhill 1994, 5-8). While my insider status made it easy for me to gain access to musical processes, it also allowed me to see my own progression and development through that of my fellow musicians. Marcus and Fischer (1986) point out that the critique of culture can be turned as much upon ourselves as on others.

Jackson describes several reasons for conducting field research on one's own culture. One of these is the "discovery of large areas of ignorance about one's own society" (Jackson 1987, 8). Since the existing literature dealing with Ukrainian bands in Canada to date, had only dealt with the subject on a somewhat superficial level, and since I had had a long involvement with this genre, I felt that I was in a position to make a contribution.

Peressini discusses the concept of social identity as the product of social relations and practices within a society and a culture. He suggests that an individual can hold several social identities simultaneously (1991, 231). Such a concept can be used to address a

multiplicity of identities both on the part of musicians (see Chapter 10), and on the part of the researcher (see Chapter 2).

A large portion of my insights was a result of my active participation as a musician in the Ukrainian music scene in Edmonton, rather than relying solely on observations made as an ethnographer. In ethnographic study, the concept of participant observation is based on the premise that the ethnographer move out of the traditional role of passive observer and actively take part in the activities of the community he or she is studying, learning the rules of the society and adjusting one's behaviour to these (Malinowski 1935). Pak suggests that when conducting ethnography "at home," the researcher is already familiar with local rules, and must take a place as a member of the community to be accepted (1991, 266). Since I was already a part of the community I was studying, this step was both an easy and a difficult one. While local norms and customs were not foreign to me, the level at which to participate in them involved a question of balance. Initially, I attended many events as an audience member, although generally recognized by the musicians as an ethnographer engaging in the research process. As a result of certain circumstances, I attended a number events as a performing musician with Charka (see Chapter 2). This offered me a unique insider view of how the group works, how and why they make the choices they do.

Recorded interviews with individuals are a standard part of ethnographic research (Ives 1980; Jackson 1987). Because of the nature of this project, I decided to pursue the key informant mode of verbal eliciting (Briggs 1990). In this approach, a few individuals from a community are singled out for intensive interviews. Briggs discuses this method in terms of fieldwork within a community where numerous interviewees are available, and a few are selected as representative of the community. I chose to limit interviews to those with musicians, focusing on their inside views of the music making process. While audience members were informally questioned during performance contexts, an in-depth

survey of this portion of the community would provide a much different perspective. Research of this nature may form the basis of future projects.

Several technical tools are currently available to ethnographers. Stone and Stone outline three characteristics relating to how a medium encodes and organizes information they feel the researcher should consider,

> (1) the medium's ability to record visual and aural iconic images as the researcher perceives them; (2) the speed and ease with which information can be recorded and stored; (3) the speed and ease with which stored information can be retrieved, considered, organized, and analyzed. (1981, 219)

For these reasons, selected performance events were recorded on videotape. Charka was recorded at various stages of their development as a band, at a variety of events including weddings, church socials, community dances and large scale festivals. Recent performances of the Polka Ramblers and the D-Drifters[7] were also recorded on video tape. Still photographs of performers and audiences also provided a record of these events (cf. Collier and Collier 1986).

A review of sound recordings and related materials produced by Ukrainian musicians has had a profound influence on this work. In many ways, these recordings provided not only an entry into the Ukrainian musical community, but have themselves been an important component for creating that community.

***Presentation***

I have chosen to follow the activity of one band,"Charka" of Edmonton as a point of entry into each of the historical nodes. Because of the unique combination of personalities and personal histories that combine to form Charka, they provide several links to points on the musical and historical web. I will begin with a short description of how I initially became involved with Charka, and how our interactions have expanded to include a variety of reciprocal "exchanges." I will also present short biographical sketches of the

individual musicians in the group to illustrate the ways in which they bring together a wide array of influences.

In order to orient the reader to the nature of the Ukrainian community, I will present a brief historical overview of the periods of significant immigration of Ukrainians to Canada. I will discuss the development of Ukrainian communities in Canada, and the effects of each subsequent immigration on the Ukrainian community at large. I will also discuss the development of Ukrainian instrumental music from its village roots in Ukraine, to its early incarnations on the Canadian prairies, focusing on instrumentation, types of ensembles and the most common contexts in which they performed.

I have identified five significant nodes of development which I have found to have influenced the direction Ukrainian music in the 1990s has taken. Each of the central chapters of this work will focus on one of those nodes. Each will present snapshots of both the musical and social activities of the Ukrainian community of the time periods in question, as well as looking at the way each individual node influences the current activity of Charka.

The development of commercial recordings in the 1920s, and especially the activity of fiddler Pavlo Humeniuk, had a significant influence on the repertoire and practices of musicians throughout North America. His body of recorded material also helped to create a canon of Ukrainian dance music, providing a unifying influence that helped define both Ukrainian music and Ukrainian identity for several generations of musicians.

In the 1960s, the Ukrainian community was evolving from an immigrant to an ethnic community. As a result, new modes of cultural expression were explored. The activity of Mickey and Bunny and the D-Drifters-5 in the fields of recording and live performance, and their development of a unique hybrid of Ukrainian country and western music again served to unite and inform an entire generation.

The 1970s saw an increase in ethnic awareness throughout Canada. At the same time, the Ukrainian community was evolving socially and economically. With an increased

urban population, and an increased influence from an educated professional class, cultural products evolved to address these developments. The conscious ethnic activity of Montreal based groups such as Rushnychok and the emergence of the Yevshan record label coincided with both the introduction of Canada's official multiculturalism policy and with discussions of "new ethnicity" within academic circles.

In the 1980s the Ukrainian community became at the same time more homogenous and more stratified. While Ukrainians increasingly became encultured into the Canadian mainstream, regional and political differences were intensified. There emerged a greater need for cultural items that would address all levels of the political, social and economic strata of Ukrainian Canadian society. At this time Ron Cahute and his group Burya were developing a unique form of Ukrainian music that incorporated western Canadian rural repertoires with eastern Canadian urban sensibilities. The resulting music was accepted as western in the east and eastern in the west, but was able to transcend all boundaries. The main context for this type of music, the "zabava," became a signifying event for Ukrainians across Canada, with a legion of Burya inspired zabava bands emerging.

While each of the previous nodes were highly influenced by media such as commercial recordings, a tradition of local music making continued to flourish. Bands that consisted of neighbours, or often family members continued to be among the most active, especially in rural areas. A look at the activity of the Polka Ramblers of Bittern Lake, Alberta will illustrate this phenomenon.

The 1990s saw the increasing effects of mainstream culture on the activity of Ukrainian musicians. Mainstream media reflected a renewed interest in the music of the 1960s and 70s. Nostalgia for the past combined with contemporary technological and marketing skills, as seen in the release of the Beatles "Anthology" recordings and related products in 1995. At precisely the same time, two extremely popular Ukrainian Canadian groups from the past re-grouped to produce new material and to perform for new audiences.

Charka is also clearly a product of the 1990s. While incorporating elements from each of the outlined nodes, they blend these influences in a way that addresses the needs of the contemporary Ukrainian community in Canada. They consciously cultivate their image as both ethnic and contemporary musicians. They attempt to address all strata of Ukrainian Canadian society, and aggressively package themselves to satisfy the dictates of various markets. They combine the artistic and cultural sensibilities of the old time Ukrainian musicians with the packaging and presentation of modern entertainment and sports industries. Their activity illustrates both the striving for unity and the inevitable diversity of the Ukrainian community as it has evolved within the framework of mainstream Canadian culture.

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[1] Barry Sliwkanich, recorded interview, June, 1998. Sliwkanich is a drummer with the band "Charka."

[2] *Tsymbaly* is the Ukrainian hammered dulcimer. See Chapter 3.

[3] *Zabava* is a Ukrainian word that literally means amusement or entertainment. It is also widely used by Ukrainians in Canada to mean a community dance.

[4] The following are but a few among the many sources available dealing with the kobzari and lirnyky, Demutskii (1903), Hnatiuk (1896), Hrushevs'ka (1927), Kolessa (1969), Kvitka (1971), Lysenko (1955), Slastion (1961). For a more detailed bibliography on the subject see Kononenko (1998).

[5] In his *A Survey of Ethnic Folkmusic Across Western Canada*, Kenneth Peacock notes over 200 folk song texts and melodies in Mrs. Koshetz's collection, which is stored in the archives of the Ukrainian Cultural and Educational Centre (Oseredok) in Winnipeg, Manitoba, with copies and accompanying recorded examples stored at the National Museum of Civilization in Ottawa.

[6] For example, *Dreams and Destinies, Andrew and District* (Andrew, Andrew Historical Society, 1980); *Lamont and Districts, Along the Victoria Trail*, ed. Elizabeth Carlsson and Irene Stainton (Edmonton, Lamont and District Historian, 1978); *Memories of Mundare, A History of Mundare and Districts* (Mundare, Mundare Historical Society, 1980); *Our Legacy, History of Smoky Lake and District* (Smoky Lake and District Cultural and Heritage Society, 1983); *A Patchwork of Memories* (Thorsby, The Historical Society of Thorsby and District, 1979); *Pride in Progress, Chipman - St. Michael - Star and Districts* (Chipman, Alberta Rose Historical Society, 1982); *Reflections, A History of Elk Point*, ed. Mary Bennett (Elk Point, Elk Point and District Historical Society, 1977); *Vegreville in Review, History of Vegreville and Surrounding Area 1880-1980*, vol. 2 (Vegreville, Vegreville and District Historical Society, 1980).

[7] Although this group first gained popularity known as "The D-Drifters-5," they later dropped the use of the number "5" in favour of simply "The D-Drifters," largely due to the fact that the band really only had four full-time members. When discussing their activity in the post Mickey and Bunny era, I will refer to the group as "The D-Drifters."

# Chapter 2. Charka

## *Charka and The Exchanging of Hats, Ukrainian Researcher - Ukrainian Community Interaction*[1]

One of the central tools for both folklorists and ethnomusicologists is fieldwork research (Cooley 1997). Fieldwork allows the researcher an opportunity to observe and participate first hand in the cultural processes they are investigating. However, during the course of interaction with a musical community, an ethnographer is often forced to "change hats." This is especially true when the researcher is an inside member of that community.

As a result of my research among Ukrainian musicians in western Canada, I have entered into close collaboration with the musical group "Charka."[2] For members of this group, music and music related activities help establish their identity as members within both ethnic and artistic communities. In the course of developing their repertoire, these musicians engage in many of the same activities as academic ethnomusicologists, observation, interviews and archival research.

While the members of this group have become a valuable resource for my study of Ukrainian music and the construction of identity, they have also come to rely on me as a source of both information and validation of their activities. Both they and I are often forced to "change hats" or to "exchange hats" in order to address our individual and mutual agendas. In this chapter I will elaborate on some of these "exchanges," the challenges they pose and the benefits.

In order to begin describing my exchanges, I found it necessary to review the changes I had experienced by looking into my own closet of hats. In the process of sorting through them I realized several striking parallels with the lives of the musicians I have been working with. While this progression of changes is probably not unlike changes many of us have undergone in our musical and scholarly careers, I will briefly outline them as a point of reference.

One of my daughter's favourite books begins with the phrase "lucky the mole born into a musical family" (Meyrick 1990). I too had the good fortune to begin listening to live music in my home, as both my father and my grandfather were amateur fiddlers who had played Ukrainian music at dances. One of my uncles was a professional musician and my formative years were spent listening to his band's rehearsals or listening to their recordings (Hat #1 observer).

After a combination of formal lessons, observation and experimentation with several instruments, I began playing at dances and weddings at the age of fifteen. As I acquired more skills, my performance experiences expanded to include not only Ukrainian dance music but also concert performances with ethno-cultural ensembles and night club work in non-ethnic musical genres (Hat #2 - musician).

In the interest of expanding my own repertoire, I began searching through archives and recordings for material and informally interviewing other musicians (Hat #3 - musician researcher). A friend informed me that what I had been doing was a type of ethnography and suggested that I consider joining him as a student in this field (Hat #4 - student researcher).

As I became more active as an ethnographer, individuals in the community I was studying began recognizing me as a resource person for various projects (Hat #5 - community resource person). After agreeing to help out with some community projects, some members of the community suggested that I should assume responsibility for organizing events (Hat #6 - community activist). These are but some of the hats I felt I was switching.

Michael Agar proposes a three part model of ethnography which is based on the interaction between the ethnographer, the subject of the ethnographer's study, and the intended audience for the ethnographer's work, with each component of the model influencing the others (Agar 1980, 203-04). As an insider member of the Ukrainian community of Edmonton, I struggled with how I would present myself to the members of

this community, who could be considered my subjects, and how I would present my findings to the academic community, my intended audience. The entire process seemed somewhat schizophrenic.

I frequently found that it was necessary for me to "change hats" in order to elicit, process and present the information I was dealing with. At times I was an ethnographer conducting research. At other times I became a student of culture seeking advice from masters in the field. At yet other times I was a practicing musician interacting with the community of my peers. I also found that I was performing this "hat changing" at all three stages of Agar's conceptual model, collection, processing and presentation.

Even with certain "hats" I often had to change hat style. As a student ethnographer, I attempted to employ various ethnographic methods, often with ensuing problems. A concept such as participant observation (Malinowski 1935), which is based on the premise that the ethnographer moves out of the traditional role of passive observer and actively take part in the activities of the community he or she is studying seemed problematic, as I was never quite fully comfortable with the level of participation I should engage in. When an ethnographer is studying a field that is physically removed from his or her own world, the possibility of becoming immersed in a new lifestyle is somewhat easier. Since I was working in my own "world" and, identified myself as one of the "natives," I wondered how I could participate and not overly upset the balance of the activities and events I was trying to investigate.

I also struggled with hats in the presentation stage. As a student, I felt a pressure to maintain a level of objectivity in my writing. I had not yet realized that I could utilize my entire wardrobe of hats in order to connect all parts of my personality to my research.

Mary Louise Pratt (1986) discusses the tension in traditional ethnography between "personal narrative" which situates the author in a particular place, time and situation, and contains the self and its experience, and normative statements which claim generalized scientific authority and a impersonal point of view. According to the folklorist Bruce

Jackson (1987) the scientific method is only useful for investigations that are absolutely replicable, as in the physical sciences. Since an infinite number of subjective factors are always influencing the ethnographer's perception and interpretation, it is not realistic to report the findings as clearly objective facts. I began to realize that perhaps my reports could have room for more than one hat.

Again I emphasize that while these examples are by no means unique, they represent some of the problems that I, and perhaps many other students of ethnography, encounter. The question of changing hats can best be illustrated in my interaction with George Paleniuk of the band Charka.

*Charka and the Ukrainian Community*

Charka is an Edmonton-based Ukrainian dance band. That is to say, they are Ukrainians who play music for dancing in general, with a bulk of their repertoire consisting of Ukrainian pieces. Another considerable portion of their repertoire consists of non-Ukrainian music. While they perform extensively at events within the Ukrainian community such as weddings, anniversaries, mid-winter or "Malanka" celebrations, pre-Lenten dances known as "pushchennia," at fund raising events for Ukrainian organizations and at Ukrainian festivals, they also perform at similar events for non-Ukrainian audiences. In these instances they draw on their non-Ukrainian repertoire.

Charka was formed in 1993 by accordionist George Paleniuk. It was his intention to fulfill a function within the Ukrainian musical scene where he perceived a void.[3]

Ukrainian immigration to Canada occurred in three predominant waves which occurred prior to the First World War, during the inter-war years; and following the Second World War. After a period of more than thirty years with virtually no new immigration, in the late 1980s there began a small trickle of new Ukrainian immigrants arriving from Eastern Europe. As a result of the timing and composition of these waves of

immigration, the Ukrainian community of Edmonton is somewhat stratified in social, economic and cultural terms.[4]

Due to these differences, the musical tastes of the various strata are also quite diverse. While the descendants of the first two waves of immigration generally tend to prefer instrumental music based on social dance genres, the post-war immigration generally prefer a more refined, urban style of music, often with greater emphasis on sung vocal texts. The growing community of newly arrived immigrants also have their own musical preferences, based largely on the contemporary music scene in Ukraine and Eastern Europe. While each constituency has its respective resources of musicians who can perform their preferred styles of music, Paleniuk realized that no one musical ensemble could satisfy the musical demands of all of these factions. It was his intention to establish a group that could achieve this goal.

It was after Paleniuk had assembled a group of musicians whose musical and cultural background, musical repertoire, and instrumentation he felt were acceptable for realizing his goals, that he first called me.

*Initial Exchanges*

In my initial encounter with George Paleniuk, I was approached as an expert in the field of Ukrainian music [yet another hat], and as a source of information. George obtained my name and telephone number from Wade Wasylciw, the tsymbaly player in his new group, whom I had interviewed as part of my research for my masters thesis on the tsymbaly performance tradition in Alberta (Cherwick 1992). They recognized me as someone connected with the university, interested in and doing studies of Ukrainian music — in short, as a resource.

As George outlined his project I listened with growing enthusiasm. The possibility of documenting the development of a new band could be a valuable component of my study of Ukrainian bands on the prairies. As I answered his questions, I also began looking at

George as a potential resource. Indeed, with each subsequent encounter, George and I "exchanged" the hats of ethnographer and resource person, he looking for tools to establish his band, and I looking for tools to describe the establishment of his band.

As George became more aware of the range of resources available to him, he increasingly engaged in various types of ethnographic fieldwork. At my suggestion, he surveyed the sound recordings held in the Ukrainian Folklore Archives at the University of Alberta. He then went on to check out collections at other institutions. He attended community events and observed the performances of other bands. He also informally interviewed many musicians, soliciting their opinions and suggestions.

*Ukrainian Identity as Stimulus*

Another of George Paleniuk's reasons for establishing "Charka" was to create a vehicle for expressing his Ukrainian identity. Sociological studies have shown that attachment to ethnic communities are more pronounced among immigrants than among their descendants (Reitz and Breton 1994). However, attachment within the Ukrainian community sometimes appears to contradict this statement, considering that there had been virtually no immigration of Ukrainians to Canada in the period between the early 1950s and the late 1980s. This can perhaps be explained both by the community's isolation from its country of origin, and by the perception that it was responsible for maintaining cultural traditions which were discouraged by the Soviet regime in Ukraine.

George Paleniuk describes himself as a "born again Ukrainian." This term is common within the community, and refers to members who may have been removed from the social and cultural activities of the group, and have now re-entered active participation, often with increased zeal and fervor (cf. Herberg 1960). Although a child of post-war immigrants, active in the Ukrainian community, Paleniuk had distanced himself from Ukrainian life due to his intense participation in organized sports at various levels. As with

Christians who have experienced a "rebirth," Paleniuk identifies a single significant event which affected his own "rebirth" (cf. Stromberg 1990).

In 1991 Paleniuk attended the 25th anniversary reunion of a Ukrainian youth choir that he had once been a member of. This event marked Paleniuk's re-entry into active participation in the Ukrainian community, and allowed him to retrieve two old "hats" from his wardrobe, Ukrainian and musician, which ultimately lead to his desire to form a Ukrainian band.[5]

According to R. Trimillos, music is often used as a symbol of ethnic identity. Strategies for establishing ethnic identity range from maintaining traditional musical ensembles, to embedding traditional repertoire in new musical settings, to developing ethnic performers of Euro-American musics (1986, 10-11). George Paleniuk and his band "Charka," of Edmonton, employs all of these strategies. However, expressing Ukrainian identity is not the only goal of this group. As easily as they don the hats of Ukrainian musicians, they can exchange them for those of non-Ukrainian musicians. As mentioned earlier, in order to obtain work at non-Ukrainian events the group can shed its well-cultivated ethnic identity for one that is more cosmopolitan and versatile.

*Further Exchanges*

During our interaction, George Paleniuk and I have engaged in many other exchanges of hats. In my role as a community activist, I have enlisted his services as a musician and an organizer. Similarly, in his role as a community activist he has asked me to speak about Ukrainian music to community and youth groups he is involved with. In appreciation for introduction and access to archival materials, Paleniuk has actively solicited further materials from the community to be deposited in our university's archival collection.

Although I often view George as a musician either through his role in his band or through his participation in community events, he also initiated another exchange of hats. Aware of my skills as a musician and realizing that I was very familiar with his group's

repertoire and style through my study of their work, Paleniuk asked if I would help him out by filling in for one of his musicians who could not appear at some of their pre-booked engagements. In light of his considerable help with my work, and the unique inside view of his group this opportunity would provide, I gladly agreed.

*Web Connections*

Clifford Geertz refers to culture as "webs of significance" which people spin and in which they are suspended (1973, 5). Totally oblivious to Geertz, George Paleniuk also concluded that the musical culture he was a part of was a "web" which he was only beginning to untangle through his investigations. He was amazed at the way one musician or source of information could provide a link to many others. I represented but one point on that web. By connecting with me, George gained access to my own web of significance, while at the same time granting me access to his.

George Paleniuk and I are engaged in an ongoing discourse about Ukrainian music and identity from the points of view of musician, ethnographer and activists. As we both continue to take an interest in each other's activities, and a pro-active role in the Ukrainian musical community of Edmonton, we also grow as colleagues and friends. Both he and I have mutually benefited from each other's ability to change or exchange hats. Our frequent exchanges ensure that neither of us will be left to brave the musical or ethnographic elements with our heads uncovered.

***Who is "Charka"***

Because of unique circumstances surrounding my interactions with Charka, and the unique make-up of this group, I have selected them in order to present an encapsulated view of the Ukrainian musical community of Alberta. I believe that this will help to represent different streams of musical activity within the community as well as to tie

together some of those streams, since this is precisely one of the goals of this particular group.

Charka is a five piece "polka band"[6] that has been performing since 1993. In terms of instrumentation, it is not unlike many other Ukrainian bands in east central Alberta, accordion, guitar, drums, saxophone/keyboard, and tsymbaly. However, it is the conscious way that they utilize these instruments that helps define who they are.

The band claims connection with numerous traditions which represent sub-groups of the Ukrainian community and sub-genres of Ukrainian music, urban, rural, old time, contemporary, new immigrant/contemporary Ukraine. They make a conscious effort to address the audiences for each of these different styles by effectively changing their repertoire in order to suit individual performance events. In this way they believe that they are unique in comparison to other Ukrainian bands in the area. However, one of the most important factors defining this group is their belief that they are performing "authentic" Ukrainian music.

One of the factors that the members of Charka feels makes them unique as an ensemble is the diversity of backgrounds of its members. Because the individual musicians are products of different facets of the Ukrainian community in Canada, they each bring to the group different resources and different views of what Ukrainian music is. It is through their mutual discourse and negotiation that they have developed a blend of Ukrainian identities which they believe speaks both for their collective identity as a group, and at the same time to various parts of the Ukrainian community in general. Because the individual identities play such an important role in shaping the group identity, I would like to provide some brief information about each of the group members.

*George*

George Paleniuk is the driving force behind Charka. Besides playing accordion, he is also the band's manager and main promoter. It is largely through his initiative that the

group was formed. Paleniuk is the son of third wave immigrants, born in England while his parents were en route to Canada. His parents' decision to settle in Edmonton provided him with an environment different from most other children of this wave of immigration, especially those who settled in eastern Canada. Although he was raised in an urban environment, the Ukrainian community of Edmonton of the 1950s and 60s was still very much a product of the earlier, rural-based waves of immigration. This provided Paleniuk with insights into different segments of the Ukrainian community. His earliest musical education was listening to the frequent singing parties that took place among members of the immigrant community. His parents continued to socialize with other Ukrainians who had arrived in Canada via England, and singing folk songs was one of their main forms of entertainment. Because his father played the accordion, Paleniuk also began playing this instrument. However, since his accordion teacher was not Ukrainian, Paleniuk was introduced to a variety of musical genres. Much of this repertoire was based on the polka "standards" (popular pieces played by most dance bands) and other "continental" music, waltzes, fox trots, tangos and other dance genres taken from various European cultures (cf. Greene, 1992).

Around the same time, Paleniuk also became involved in Ukrainian community and youth groups, including choirs. Choral singing provided not only an introduction to another musical genre, but also the development of a social network which would later form an important part of Charka's initial fan base.

Friendships formed in the choir also introduced him to another musical milieu. Some other choir members were involved in bands that played at weddings and dances. Paleniuk and his friends often attended open community dances, and at times even attended weddings or dances where they were not invited guests, in order to listen to other musical groups.[7] Often Paleniuk would bring along his accordion and he and his friends would play and sing folk songs after the band had stopped performing.[8] All of these various experience helped form his musical worldview.

It is interesting to note that Paleniuk spent a long period of time where he did not take part in Ukrainian community activities, and, in fact, virtually disassociated himself from the community. For many years education, sports and business activities took precedence over involvement in Ukrainian events. In this way, Paleniuk followed the classic pattern for children of immigrant communities. While the immigrants themselves strive to maintain ties to the languages and cultures of their former homelands, their children quickly accept the practices of the new host country. Often this is at the expense of the culture of their parents (Isajiw, 1975).

After a period of approximately fifteen years, Paleniuk re-entered Ukrainian life. The catalyst for his renewed interest was the reunion of a choir he had been a member of in his youth. The choir's reunion activities included a banquet and dance with live music When the hired musicians had finished for the evening, many of the people present gathered to sing folk songs, as is often the custom at Ukrainian community events. In this instance, one member of the crowd accompanied the singers on an accordion. This reminded Paleniuk of the many times he and his friends had similarly performed as young men. It sparked an interest to once again take up the accordion, which he had also left for several years. His interest in the accordion and Ukrainian music led to a renewed interest in the Ukrainian language. It also led him to become involved in Ukrainian community organizations. In fact, Paleniuk's "rebirth" is also typical of that of the third generation of immigrant/ethnic communities. It is often members of this generation that aggressively pursue their cultural roots in search of a unique and meaningful identity in juxtaposition to the dominant culture. Often their level of ethno-cultural activity equals or even surpasses that of their parents. This shift in attitude placed Paleniuk in a unique situation and provided the impetus for him to establish his own Ukrainian band.

When Paleniuk set out to form a band he was already aware of the various sub-groups within the Ukrainian community, having been a part of more than one of them himself. His vision was to create a group that could address many of these various sub-

groups, thus helping to establish some sense of community solidarity. If one musical ensemble could meet the need of various diverse factions, then perhaps there could be other sites of common discourse between such groups. Paleniuk was fortunate in that he was able to find musical partners who individually happened to represent different parts of the Ukrainian community of Alberta.

*Orest*

Paleniuk's first collaborator was Orest Pohoreski, also the son of third wave immigrants. Unlike Paleniuk's family, Pohoreski's settled in eastern Canada, as did the majority of their fellow post-war immigrants. Consequently, Orest's perceptions of the Ukrainian experience, as well as his understanding of what constitutes Ukrainian music, differ somewhat from Paleniuk's.[9]

Pohoreski plays saxophone and keyboard and sings in Charka. His choice of main instrument, the saxophone, helps to reflect his musical sensibilities and those of the community in which he grew up. There were many more skilled labourers and professionals originally from urban centres in Ukraine, among urban Ukrainian population of eastern Canada than there had been in the earlier prairie immigrations. As a result, their musical tastes were somewhat different than the village dance music preferred on the prairies. Since this group left Ukraine at a later time, they brought along a great deal of the music and dance genres that were popular in Europe just prior to the Second World War. This, coupled with their situation in an urban environment surrounded with urban popular music, caused a slight variation in the kinds of dance music they preferred. Along with polkas and waltzes, there was a much greater concentration on Latin dance rhythms, tangos, rhumbas and cha chas, often set to Ukrainian texts. The instrumentation of eastern groups also favoured saxophones and brass instruments over the fiddles and tsymbaly most prevalent on the Prairies.

Pohoreski's musical background included performing in large orchestras that provided accompaniment for stage dancing, as well as performing in dance bands. He simultaneously performed in both a Ukrainian dance band,"The Bukovyna Brass," as well as another group made up of members from various European cultures. When his business career forced him to relocate to Edmonton, he initially continued traveling to Ontario to perform with the Bukovyna Brass. He later stopped performing to concentrate on business and family life. During this time, he continued to take an active role in the Ukrainian community and to sing in choirs.

Upon joining forces with Paleniuk, Pohoreski brought with him a wide knowledge of the kinds of music that appealed to the urban Ukrainian intelligentsia. He was also a fluent speaker of Ukrainian with a well developed singing voice. These factors would quickly help give Charka credibility as a truly Ukrainian band, especially when compared to other groups whose spoken and sung Ukrainian was less proficient. Along with his singing, saxophone and keyboard playing, Pohoreski has developed the skills necessary for transcribing and arranging music. These latter skills would help the group compile a large repertoire, complete with written scores, in a relatively short period of time.

*Barry*

Barry Sliwkanich, Charka's drummer, is a descendant of the second wave of Prairie immigrants.[10] His family settled on farmland west of Mundare in the mid-1920s. Although his family moved to the Edmonton area when he was eight years old, they maintained a close and constant relationship with the rural experience, continuing to own and work a portion of farmland.

Part of the rural connection that informs Charka's present activity is based on Barry's early musical experiences. Among those, a large impression was made by family and community music making. Sliwkanich recalls family members congregating at one of the farm homes for house parties, where a significant feature was the performance of

instrumental music and singing. His father and uncles were all able to play several instruments, and regularly took turns playing traditional songs and dance melodies. It was a desire to take an active part in this family music making that encouraged Sliwkanich to learn to play a musical instrument. He first began learning the guitar, but at the age of twelve switched to drums, studying with Edmonton drummer Don Remika.[11] Sliwkanich soon formed a rock band with some of his classmates, and then went on to join the band of well known tsymbalist Johnny Merenick. It was with Merenick's band that he became familiar with the repertoire and performance contexts that would later form a large part of Charka's milieu.[12]

Community activity also played a big part in Sliwkanich's musical formation. As a member of church groups and Ukrainian youth organizations, he became aware of a wider range of Ukrainian folk song tradition, taking part in Christmas caroling and community singing sessions. As with Paleniuk, the contacts made in these community networks were an important part of Charka's later sphere of activity.

Sliwkanich spent many years away from music performance. University education, a job in Smoky Lake, Alberta (another rural location), family commitments and community activities commanded all of his attention. When his children had reached teen age, Sliwkanich decided to actively seek out new performance opportunities. This happened to coincide with the time that Paleniuk was looking for members for his group. Paleniuk had first approached Sliwkanich's brother Gord, who had been a drummer with several local Ukrainian and country bands, [13] but since he unavailable at the time, he contacted Barry.

Along with playing drums, Sliwkanich feels that one of his most important contributions to Charka is to suggest repertoire that is popular with two audiences that he is most familiar with, those living in rural areas, regardless of their age, and young listeners, regardless of their location. He monitors the rock and country music that is popular with his own children and their peers, and selects those pieces that he feels will work for Charka. By keeping in tune with these audiences, he feels that Charka, as a group, is more

marketable than they would be if they performed a strictly Ukrainian repertoire. His position as a member of a rural community also is helpful in presenting Charka as a group that was in tune with rural sensibilities, unlike other groups from the city. However, he emphasizes that it is still his love for Ukrainian music that is his prime motivation for continuing to play with Charka.

*Wade*

To complete the band's line-up, Paleniuk wanted an instrument that would immediately be identified with Ukrainian music. He connected with young tsymbaly player Wade Wasylciw. Wasylciw, the grandson of first wave immigrants, is the youngest member of Charka. His activity in this group is an encapsulation of the Ukrainian experience for many members of his generation. While born and raised in an urban environment, he is still connected to the rural experience through relatives. While fully enculturated into mainstream Canadian society, with the musical tastes of the average Canadian, he plays the most distinctly Ukrainian instrument of the group, the tsymbaly. Wasylciw had studied tsymbaly playing with popular Edmonton tsymbalist Steven Chwok, and had then gone on to perform frequently as a soloist at various community events. In fact, it was the tsymbaly, and the symbolic messages tied to the sound and appearance of that instrument, that helped give Charka its initial identity.

Wasylciw's role in the group is two fold. On one hand he is a visible (and audible) link to the instrumental music traditions of Ukrainians on the Prairies. While not often featured as a solo instrument, the fact that the tsymbaly is present on stage immediately validates this group in the eyes of many lovers of Ukrainian music. At the same time, he provides a direct link to the youth culture of the both the Ukrainian and mainstream Canadian communities. It is this younger audience that often comprises the larger part of Charka's audiences, and drives their selection of repertoire. Wasylciw plays a large part in suggesting pieces that are popular with the high school and university aged audiences. His

involvement in community organizations, and especially stage dance ensembles, also provides the band with a link to an especially active and vibrant component of the Ukrainian community.[14]

*Victor*

Victor Ruduke is both a guitarist and a featured singer with Charka. Not only is he the most recent addition to the group, he also represents the most recent wave of immigration to Canada, arriving in 1991. Prior to his immigration to Canada, Ruduke was a professional musician in Ukraine, performing with such well known artists as Lydia Sandules'ka, Oleksander Harkavyi and as member of the popular band "Smerichka."[15] It was following a cross-Canada tour with Smerichka that Ruduke made the decision to remain in Canada, settling with his wife in Edmonton, where she had relatives.

Charka had performed as a four piece group for approximately six months. While they were relatively well received for a beginning band, they were aware that some elements to their group sound were still missing It is agreed by all other members of Charka, that Ruduke is a large reason for their musical successes. On the one hand, he adds elements which have helped the band gain respect among the Ukrainian audiences, he could sing not only the standard folk songs which had long been popular with generations of Ukrainian Canadians, but also knew many newly composed songs which had been popular in Ukraine and remain popular with the rapidly growing community of recently arrived immigrants. Through Ruduke, Charka now had better access to this potential audience. At the same time, he has also added elements which have helped attract a larger Canadian audience, his involvement in popular music in Ukraine, including playing covers[16] of western rock music, allow him to add the rock and country guitar stylings that make it possible for Charka to perform credible covers of contemporary hits. According to Sliwkanich, audiences most often comment on Ruduke's musicianship and stage presence. "They can see that he lives and loves the music," says Sliwkanich.

*Group Strengths*

All the members of Charka agree that there are two main factors that add to their popularity and provide the strongest identifiers for the group. Firstly, they are extremely proud of their versatility. They believe that their ability to perform pieces that draw from numerous genres of dance music (rock, country, old time, swing, Ukrainian) sets them apart from other groups who rely predominantly on one or two styles of music. In fact, it is this versatility that has become their prime selling point in the obtaining of new performance dates.

The second factor which sets Charka apart from their contemporaries is the ability to sing in Ukrainian. This is largely due to Victor Ruduke and Orest Pohoreski's abilities to speak and pronounce Ukrainian texts properly. The band notes that while other groups may be equal or even superior in some of their musical arrangements, the quality of their Ukrainian vocals reveals their lack of familiarity with the Ukrainian language.

Charka enjoyed a rapid rise in popularity within the Ukrainian community of Edmonton. Within a year of their first performance, they were one of the busiest groups, performing at many high profile events. This was partly due to the unique blend of individuals and experience, and an active approach to promoting that blend.

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[1] The interaction between ethnographers and individuals in the communities where they are working has recently become an important point of discussion for ethnomusicologists. See Kisliuk (1997), Beaudry (1997), and Barz (1997).

[2] The name "Charka" comes from the Ukrainian word *charka* which means a small glass, like the type used for alcoholic beverages. The band selected this name because it invokes images of party-like events where the kind of music they perform is often played and alcohol is often served.

[3] George Paleniuk, recorded interview, March 1996.

[4] For a more detailed account see Chapter 3.

[5] See "George" below.

[6] This is the way the individual members of the group identify themselves.

[7] Often on Saturday evenings, Paleniuk and his friends would dress up in suits and search for a wedding. They would arrive at wedding receptions after the meal had been completed and the dancing had begun.

[8] Communal singing was an integral part of Ukrainian village wedding rituals and continued to be and important form of social interaction.

[9] Orest Pohoreski, unrecorded interview, July 1996.

[10] Barry Sliwkanich, recorded interview, June 1998.

[11] Remika later went on to international fame as drummer for the popular dance band "The Emeralds".

[12] Sliwkanich also performed in another band with Merenick's son. See The Music Catalog "Ukrainska" Heritage Records MC-01.

[13] Sliwkanich's brother played in the Ukrainian dance band "The Shan-Tels" along with well-known musician and community figure Eugene Zwozdesky.
[14] Wade Wasylciw, recorded interview, May, 1996.
[15] Victor Ruduke, recorded interview, June, 1998.
[16] The term "cover" refers to a rendition of a piece of music written or originally performed by another group that attempts to reproduce the sound of the original performance or recording. In contrast, a "version" of a particular piece indicates that while the basic piece is the same, the performers have altered its arrangement in some way so as to make their own performance unique. See Frith 1996, 69-70.

# Chapter 3. Setting the Scene, Ukrainian Settlement and Musical Traditions in Canada

## *Immigration and Settlement*

In order to better understand the contemporary contexts for Ukrainian music performance in western Canada, it is necessary to look at historical factors which helped establish this Ukrainian community. At the same time, a brief discussion of musical genres, musical instruments, and performance contexts in both Ukraine and Canada in the early part of this century will assist in connecting current musical practices with their sources as well as informing about more recent choices and developments made by contemporary musicians.

### *First Wave*

Ukrainian mass immigration to Canada occurred in three major waves.[1] The first wave began in the early 1890s and continued until the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. At that time approximately 170, 000 Ukrainians entered Canada (Darcovich and Yuzyk 1980, 513-14). This group, predominantly peasant agriculturists, settled primarily in rural bloc settlements in the Canadian prairie provinces. This insular settlement pattern allowed them to maintain their language and unique cultural practices while setting up individual farms, as they remained relatively isolated from the neighbouring non-Ukrainian population. They also overcame inhospitable physical and social conditions to establish an infrastructure of political, cultural and religious organizations (Kaye and Swyripa 1982, 32).

### *Second Wave*

The second wave of immigration took place in the inter-war years, between 1920 and 1934. A large percentage of these 67, 578 immigrants were farmers, although also among them were some artisans and intellectuals. Most possessed at least an elementary level and some a higher level of education (Kaye and Swyripa 1982, 48-52). While most of

this group settled primarily on farms on the western prairies, some remained in urban centres or in mining or logging camps to work as labourers (Martynowych 1991, 448-51).

*Third Wave*

The third wave of immigration began in 1947 and lasted until 1953, with 30, 834 Ukrainians, mostly displaced as a result of the war, arriving in Canada. This third immigration consisted of fewer peasant farmers, with a much higher percentage of persons with higher education, many of them professionals. Consequently, they settled more often in established cities in eastern Canada than on the rural prairies. Because of a need for low skilled workers in mining, lumbering and other industries, many of the less educated members of this group were also encouraged to settle in the east (Kaye and Swyripa 1982, 53).

While the third wave of immigration injected new energy into the cultural and intellectual life of the Ukrainian community in Canada, it was not without conflict. The first two waves of immigrants had worked hard to establish themselves financially, had set up a series of community institutions, and had begun integrating into the Canadian mainstream. This striving for financial security and acceptance by the Canadian population at large came at the expense of some loss of Ukrainian language and customs. Because of their level of education and politicization, the third wave began to assume control of cultural and political organizations soon after their arrival. While some of the newcomers felt that existing organizations had developed too much of a Canadian orientation, the attitudes of members of the first two waves of immigration toward the third were often hostile and suspicious. As a result, the third wave immigrants set up a number of new community organizations, designed to address their own unique agendas (Kaye and Swyripa 1982, 54; Luciuk 1991, 118-120).

*Post Soviet Wave*

During the Cold war era there was virtually no new immigration from Ukraine, with the exception of a few isolated cases. Since the late 1980s, there has been a increase in immigration to Canada of Ukrainians from Eastern Europe. This most recent immigration is comprised of three main groups. The first group includes large numbers of Ukrainians from Poland, who began arriving in Canada around 1988. This date coincides with the beginning of the collapse of the socialist state in Poland.[2]

The second group consists of refugees from Ukrainian settlements in Bosnia. As a result of the war in the former Yugoslavia, entire communities of Ukrainians were displaced from their homes. A large number sought refuge in Canada.

The third group contains individuals from Ukraine itself. During the Gorbachev era of glasnost, more Ukrainian citizens had the opportunity to travel beyond the borders of the Soviet Union. A number of those traveling to Canada sought asylum as refugees citing political or other persecution in their home country. With Ukraine's declaration of independence from the Soviet Union, Ukraine's borders were once again opened. Many Ukrainians with relatives or other connections began arriving in Canada. However, Canadian immigration policies made it difficult to gain permanent entry into the country.

The individuals in this most recent immigration come from a wide range of economic, educational and social backgrounds. Their most common bond is their shared experience living in an oppressive socialist political system. While each of these groups looked to the established community of Ukrainian Canadians for initial support, they have quickly established their own independent networks. Often these networks are based on interaction with individuals from the same country of origin, with growing instances of friction between factions. These new immigrants have also transported elements of the types of Ukrainian culture developed in their homelands and are quickly establishing their own social and cultural infrastructures. [3]

***Village Musical Traditions in Ukraine***

The early waves of Ukrainian immigrants to Canada transported their village music traditions. Often the instruments they used were as important in establishing a musical identity as the forms and genres that were performed.

In Ukraine, village folk orchestras consisted mainly of three or four musicians. The instrumentation varied according to region. In central Ukraine the most common grouping was two violins, *baraban* (drum) and *basolia* (bass)(Noll 1990). Among the Hutsuls in the mountains of southwestern Ukraine, groups were often formed with two violins who played in unison and a *tsymbaly* (Khotkevych 1929). In other parts of western Ukraine, violin, *tsymbaly* and *bubon* (hand drum) formed the trio referred to as *Troisti Muzyky*, or trio of musicians (Humeniuk 1972, 22). It is this kind of ensemble which formed the model for most Ukrainian bands in western Canada. While the term *Troisti Muzyky* is commonly used among Soviet scholars, the term *muzyky* or *muzykanty* appears to be more common among members of this tradition in Canada.[4]

The central instrument in most ensembles of Ukrainian instruments is the violin. String instruments of this type, such as the *hudok*,[5] have played a major role in instrumental music on Ukrainian territory for many centuries (Khotkevych 1929, 7-14). The modern violin, sometimes referred to as the queen of instruments ["*tsarytsia instrumentiv*"], was in widespread use in Ukraine by the end of the nineteenth century (Humeniuk 1972, 22).

Melodic, harmonic and rhythmic functions in instrumental ensembles can all be performed on the *tsymbaly* (hammered dulcimer). It is a trapezoid shaped box with eighteen to twenty-four courses of strings, each consisting of three to six strings, which pass over and under two bridges. The performer produces sound by occasionally plucking, but more often striking the strings with wooden mallets. While one common performance practice involves suspending the instrument from the performer's neck by means of a leather strap, allowing mobility for accompanying ritual activities (Khotkevych 1929, 163),

contemporary players performing in dance bands favour the use of an instrument stand (Cherwick 1992).

The *bubon* or *resheto* is a small hand drum, similar to the tambourine. It is predominantly played with a mallet, however the performer can use his hand and fingers to achieve numerous effects. Folk belief has it that the *bubon* should be made from the skin of a fierce dog, which apparently gives the drum a better tone.[6] Another percussion instrument is the bass drum or *baraban*, believed to have made its way into Ukrainian folk music by way of military bands (Khotkevych 1929, 280). It is often played together with a metal cymbal.

The *basolia* is similar in size and shape to the violoncello. The main difference is that the basolia is most often outfitted with only three strings (Khotkevych 1929, 34). It is worn on a strap by the performer, and functions as a bass instrument in ensembles.

The *sopilka* is a kind of folk flute which traditionally has six finger holes. It is generally made of wood, but occasionally of metal. There are two main types of *sopilka*, the *frilka*, which is played by blowing across the open end of the instrument, and the *denstivka*, where the air column is broken by a fipple or *dentse* (Mizynec 1986).

### *Local Musical Traditions among Ukrainians in Canada*

The first Ukrainian settlers to Canada experienced a technological regression when they arrived in the new land. Faced with limited financial resources, they often had to resort to primitive hand made tools, clothing and shelter in order to survive. Music also had to be "hand made," which may explain the long standing popularity of simply constructed instruments like the tsymbaly.

### *Genres of Ukrainian Music*

Music, in many forms, has played an important role in the social life of Ukrainians in Canada. Music is an integral part of most calendar and life cycle rituals. Often these

musical forms continue to be maintained long after their ritual functions have lost their significance. While the role of instrumental ensembles or orchestras is of central importance for the completion of many social rituals and for entertainment, a wide variety of other genres are also significant parts of the Ukrainian musical picture.

Choral singing is perhaps the most widespread of all Ukrainian musical genres. Multi-part singing is often recognized as one of the most distinguishing features of Ukrainian culture (Iashchenko 1962). It is connected to religious life, as an integral part of the eastern Christian liturgy and services (Matsenko 1973), social life and political life. Choral singing as part of Christmas celebrations was noted among the most popular activities of the early Ukrainian settlers to Canada (Boulton 1942, Bassa 1952). As Robert Klymasz states,

> The predilection for group singing may reflect an overt recognition of the sung word as a means of fostering a spirit of national consciousness and national self-awareness. This affiliation of choral song with political sensitivity occasionally turns the former into a national anthem, a kind of aural icon dedicated to a reaffirmation of Ukrainian ethnic loyalty. (1982, 282)

One of the first systematically organized forms of music making among the Ukrainian community in Canada to appear was the mandolin orchestra. Many of these ensembles were organized by the Ukrainian Labour and Farmer Temple Association. The first such orchestra was founded in Winnipeg in 1921, with similar groups established soon after at ULFTA halls across the Prairies (Kravchuk 1996, 333). Similar string and mandolin orchestras were organized at schools and other halls, often providing the first musical instruction for many (Klymasz 1992, 58; Lupul 1982, 152f).[7] Later, wind bands also became popular in some areas (Knysh 1982).

Drama productions offered another vehicle for musical expression (Balan 1991). Many community groups staged performances of simple plays such as "Marusia" and "Oi ne khody, Hrytsiu" complete with music, singing and dancing, as well as more ambitious musicals such as "Natalka Poltavka" and "Zaporozhets' za Dunaiem" (Klymasz 1982, 286-

87). The development of staged folk dance (cf. Avramenko 1947) provided yet another genre of performance with music as a central component.

It is perhaps because of its ubiquitous nature that instrumental music[8] performed by small combinations of musicians and dance bands has received so little attention (Klymasz 1982, 293). Since choral music, orchestras and theatrical ensembles require some organizational superstructure, and have often been closely tied to larger community organizations, descriptions of these activities appear in the concert programs and reports of said organizations. Instrumental music, on the other hand, falls outside the realm of organized community activity. While musicians performed for community functions, it was often to provide music for leisure activities, dances and parties. As a result, the activity of instrumentalists themselves were viewed as leisure activities, and consequently not accorded the same level of attention as other performing arts. It is the activity of such musicians that we will examine in this study.

***Instrumental Ensembles (Bands/Orchestras)***

The small instrumental ensembles of violin, tsymbaly and drum popular in the villages of western Ukraine served as the prototype for most similar ensembles among the early Ukrainians settlers in western Canada (Maga 1980; Savich 1980). This kind of instrumentation continued to serve as the core for western Canadian Ukrainian bands well into the 1970s.

As Ukrainians came into greater contact with North American musical styles some changes were made in the composition of their bands. Ukrainian musicians in Canada were influenced by trends in popular music and began incorporating new instruments and new repertoires. The music performed by these bands still consisted largely of traditional Ukrainian pieces; however, there was now more of an emphasis on providing music for dancing rather than ritual music.

The trend toward new instrumentation was fueled by two initiatives. Firstly, by adopting new instruments, musicians could appear distinct in comparison to their peers, thereby securing more engagements. Moving beyond traditional instrumentation also made it easier to reproduce the sounds of non-Ukrainian popular music. Another factor influencing the adoption of new instruments was the need for more volume. As community events grew in size and moved from houses to barns and community halls, the volume of sound a band needed to produce was much greater. It was increased volume as well as an expanded range of technical possibilities that led to an explosion in popularity of the piano accordion throughout North America in the 1930s (Greene 1992, 124), and its subsequent appearance in Ukrainian bands. In a similar fashion the banjo often replaced the tsymbaly and the saxophone often substituted for the violin.

The music of sweet and swing dance bands were also of considerable influence. Local groups adopted not only the instrumentation and repertoire of such groups, but also their modes of dress and stage presentation, such as sitting behind large wooden music stands.

In the 1940s, ethnic music became popular music. International hits like "Beer Barrel Polka" and "Bei Mir Bist Du Schön" (Greene 1992, 127-39) and the "Clarinet Polka" (Greene 1992, 219), among others[9] lead to a wider acceptance for ethnic style music. It also created a commercial model for local musicians to emulate. Since these recordings also used larger ensembles incorporating the big band sound, it was easy for local musicians to apply these principles to their own music making. While Ukrainian groups still relied primarily on the violin, they more and more frequently included saxophones, trumpets and even trombones, with the accordion assuming an increasingly prominent role (cf. Metro Radomsky 1980, 505-506; John Zelisko 1980).[10]

Because of its rural roots, Ukrainian traditional music was closely connected to other rural based genres like American country music. Both share similar origins in acoustic string band music, with the violin, or fiddle, taking a prominent role. The

popularity of country music in rural regions of western Canada led to the further development of this connection, with its ultimate manifestation occurring in the 1960s (Klymasz 1972).[11] While country music remains an important influence for Ukrainian bands, rural and "old country" connections are often mistaken for "country" connections by those outside the western Canadian community (Metro Radomsky 1981).[12]

Another genre closely related to country music and equally significant was "old-time" music. Again, the prominence of the fiddle, and the popularity of nationally known stars such as Don Messer and Andy DeJarlis had a profound influence on many Ukrainian Canadian violinists.[13] The high profile visibility of Ukrainian-Canadian fiddler Al Cherny on weekly broadcasts of CBC television's "The Tommy Hunter Show" helped solidify the link between Ukrainian and old time fiddling.

As popular music changed, so did the repertoire of Ukrainian bands. As rock and other genres gained popularity, they also became part of the repertoire for bands in western Canada. For most Ukrainian bands, versatility has long been of central importance in securing work. In this way they are not unlike club date musicians working in other locations (MacLeod 1993).

## *Contexts*

### *Weddings*

Perhaps the most celebrated social event among Ukrainians is the wedding. From the arrival of the first Ukrainian immigrants to the present time, weddings have provided local musicians with the greatest opportunity to perform and receive payment for their services (Savich 1980).[14]

In Ukraine, the traditional village wedding usually extended over several days, filled with ritual, feasting, music and dancing. Celebrations often began several days prior to the actual wedding with rituals for the preparation of the ritual wedding bread known as

*korovai* (Chaban 1970), the ceremonial tree known as *derevtse* (Ravliuk 1970, 184), and the wedding wreaths or *vinky* (Roshkevych and Franko 1970, 73-79). Each action was accompanied by ritual singing, accompanied by musicians. These musicians usually remained after the ceremonies to play music for dancing, which could last until the following morning (Roshkevych and Franko 1970, 73-124).

Musicians played an important role throughout the actual wedding day, providing music for the ritual blessing of the bride and groom by their parents, playing marches as the couple traveled to and from church, and accompanying all subsequent activities that took place at the respective homes of each family. Wedding festivities were held simultaneously at the homes of the bride and groom, with separate groups of musicians hired for each location. The weddings could last up to four or five days, with music and dancing throughout (Chaban; Ravliuk; Roshkevych and Franko).

Ukrainian wedding celebrations in Canada, from the arrival of the first immigrants and through to the 1950s, preserved patterns set in Ukraine. Weddings lasting several days continued to be held at the family homes of the couples being married. Special preparations were made for dancing outdoors, with yards swept clean (Maryka 1979, 833), or special platforms or dance floors constructed (Panych 1982, 612-13). The dancing sometimes took place in the farmhouses (Bennett 1977, 327), in the barn (Switlyk 1979, 924), or in specially constructed "lean-to" shelters (Chernichen 1979, 923).

The tradition of holding weddings at home lasted into the 1950s, when the community hall became the preferred location for such large events (Klymasz 1992, 144; Makuch 1988), with food preparation assumed by local community organizations (Hoshowski 1979, 145). While rural weddings often still follow this pattern, most urban weddings take place in church or community halls or in hotel banquet rooms, with catering services providing the meals.[15]

*House Parties*

One of the common social events in the villages of Ukraine were the evening parties or *vechernytsi*. This form of socializing was carried over to the Ukrainian settlements of east central Alberta, sometimes connected with work bees (Klymasz 1992).

House parties could be held whenever anyone decided to call one, and wherever there was enough room to accommodate a crowd. Often, parties were held on Sunday afternoons and other holidays, following the local church service, when hosts would serve a lunch in the late afternoon, after which some guests would leave to tend to farm chores while others stayed behind to talk, play cards or dance (M. Ratsoy 1983, 35). As one participant noted,

> After church service neighbours would meet at the home of some homesteader and to dance to the music of a violin and dulcimer they would dance on the green grass wherever a meadow was available. (Kolotyluk 1983, 526)

Music was the focal point of most house parties. Guests enjoyed singing and dancing to music provided by local musicians ("Primrose" 1974; Ruff 1979, 113). While one of the most common configurations of musicians for this type of dance was the violin and tsymbaly duo (Pawluk 1978, 340), any available instruments would suffice. These parties would also last until "the wee hours of the morning" ("Primrose" 1974).

Farms that consisted of both an older and newer house were often preferred locations for dances, providing dancers with a separate building to themselves (M. Ratsoy 1983, 35). Occasionally house dances were held to celebrate the construction of a new building, such as a house or barn (Kobeluck 1979, 248).

While these parties continue to be opportunities for casual music making, they no longer provide the same opportunities for musicians. Nonetheless, this type of activity was a significant part of the musical education of many contemporary musicians (such as Charka's Barry Sliwkanich and George Paleniuk).

*Community Dances*

As rural Alberta communities developed, the community dance offered musicians another possible opportunity for performance. These opportunities increased as the number of community halls also increased. Some these halls were converted old stores ("Dreams" 1980, 203) or school houses (Zane 1980, 589; Malayko 1980, 238), run by private individuals.

Often dances coincided with religious or community holidays such as the feast days of Saints (B. Ratsoy 1983, 237), Valentine's Day (Hackman 1980, 255-56), Easter ("Dreams" 1980, 226), and dances known as *Pushchennia*, held before fasting seasons prior to Christmas and Easter (B. Ratsoy 1983, 237). Dances were also staged as fundraising events for schools and community organizations ("Dreams" 1980, 202).[16]

Some dances were held for no specific reason. The tradition of Sunday afternoon socializing following church service continued into the era of the community hall, with some halls used for dances every week (B. Ratsoy 1983, 235).

Currently, community dances are second only to weddings as performance opportunities for musicians. dances and banquets continue to provide community organizations with a source of revenue for their various projects. As the scope of the individual event or the profile of the organizing group (such as large stage dance ensembles) increases, so do the levels of prestige and remuneration for musicians.

*Khram/ Praznyk*

For many of the Ukrainian settlements in Western Canada, the centre of community activity was the local church, with church related functions such as the *khram* or *praznyk* providing an environment for social interaction.

The *khram* is a yearly celebration held to commemorate the feast day of a church's patron saint, observed with special services, followed by a festive meal, with people from neighbouring communities often traveling to take part (Ratsoy 1983a, 33; 1993b, 56).

After the commemorative service, members of the parish would invite guests to their homes for "a meal and merry making with eating, drinking, singing and even dancing" (Ratsoy 1983a, 33). Some guests would leave one party early in order to make the rounds of other *khram* celebrations in the area (Kishpan 1980, 395). In some parishes, the *khram* was celebrated with picnics, bazaars or dances held near the church or community hall (Maryka 1979, 833). These celebrations also served as fundraising events for the community ("Patchwork" 1979, 143).

For many Ukrainians, the *khram* ranked along with weddings as the most notable social events in the community (Cholak 1980, 306; Huculak 1980, 376; Kramar 1980, 547). These celebrations were also noted by musicians as important performance venues (Malayko 1980, 445; "Wostok" 1980, 547).

*Festivals*

Since the mid-1960s, ethnic folk festivals have taken an increasingly important role as a forum for Ukrainian music (Klymasz 1976). For the community they provide an opportunity to package their culture for presentation to the general public outside the group. For musicians, they provide access to a wider range of audiences. Currently in western Canada major Ukrainian festivals are presented at Dauphin, Manitoba (Canada's National Ukrainian Festival) and Vegreville, Alberta (Vegreville Ukrainian Pysanka Festival). Smaller scale festivals are held in Gardenton, Teulon, and Valley River in Manitoba; at Saskatoon, Foam Lake and Prince Albert in Saskatchewan; and at Sherwood Park and the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village in Alberta. Ukrainian pavilions are also a part of multi-cultural festivals in Winnipeg (Folklorama), Regina (Mosaic), Saskatoon (Folkfest) and Edmonton (Heritage Days).

Festivals provide an array of performance possibilities ranging from concert-style grandstand performances, to providing music for late night dances, and from musicians demonstrating instruments for exhibiting builders to performances on parade floats. It is

also the most likely forum for the exchange of ideas between musicians from various strata of the community. Many western Canadians received their first taste of eastern Canadian groups like Rushnychok and Burya through their performances at the Dauphin and Vegreville festivals.

*Clubs*

In the late 1960s, provincial laws began allowing the performance of live music in licensed establishments. As a result, club owners began looking for acts to attract patrons. In Winnipeg, an entire network of hotel bars began featuring Ukrainian dance bands.[17] Rural hotels across the prairies also featured Ukrainian performers.[18] In addition to hotels, legion halls and ethno-cultural clubrooms booked bands for dancing. Some Ukrainian musicians like Mickey Sheppard of Mickey and Bunny, and the D-Drifters fashioned full time professional careers out of performing both Ukrainian and non-Ukrainian music in clubs.[19]

***Electronic Media***

*Commercial Recordings*

Commercial recordings not only provided a further forum for musicians, they helped unite and define the community. For the early immigrants a gramophone was among the first "luxury" items purchased (Klymasz 1991, 41). The early commercial recordings produced by the large American firms (Columbia, Okeh, Stinson) often attempted to package not only the music, but the dialogues and rituals of old country life (Spottswood 1982).[20]

The development of a Canadian Ukrainian recording industry began at the end of the 1940s, when Alex Groshak of Winnipeg produced an album of Ukrainian songs performed by the Ukrainian Male Chorus (of Winnipeg) on the Quality Record label. The success of these recordings lead him to start his own label, Regis Records, which recorded

a number of Ukrainian dance bands from Manitoba.[21] Around the same time a series of popular Ukrainian folk songs sung to guitar accompaniment were recorded by "Tony the Troubadour" (surname Stechishen) in Ontario (Klymasz 1982, 285).

The 1960s saw a boom in Ukrainian recording in Canada. Groshak, through his involvement with Mickey and Bunny, [22] established the highly successful V-Records label, producing recordings of artists from across the prairies, and shipping those products around the world. His success spawned a number of similar competing labels, Galaxy, UK, and Eagle Records, among others. All focused principally on prairie dance bands and singers of traditional and ritual (primarily wedding) songs. In the 1970s Heritage Records of Edmonton and Sunshine Records (and its later subsidiary Baba's Records) of Winnipeg also joined this market.

The 1970s also saw the development of an eastern Canadian recording scene. Centred chiefly around Montreal, Sage Records and Yevshan Records developed an urban Ukrainian market to compete with the rural-flavoured products from the west. At this time numerous independent and self-produced products entered the market. With the development of recording technology, the 1980s and especially the 1990s saw an explosion of this "homegrown" type of product.

The commercial recording is not only an economic tool for musicians. While a good selling recording can generate some income for musicians, it is probably the function as a symbol of both status and artistic expression which drives them to produce more recordings.

*Radio in Western Canada*

Radio is another medium that provides both a forum for musicians and a unifying force for the community. Broadcasts of Ukrainian programs began in Alberta on CKUA in the 1940s.[23] CBC Radio occasionally aired programs of Ukrainian music and current events ("Cause" 1939; "March" 1944), with artists like fiddler Tommy Buick presenting regular live broadcasts.[24] Eventually commercial radio stations, like CF.CW of Camrose,

Alberta and CKDM of Dauphin, Manitoba also began to broadcast Ukrainian programs. For many years the Ukrainian Hour with Dan Chomlak on CF.CW was one of the top rated shows of any kind in the Edmonton market (Makuch 1981). Chomlak produced recorded versions of his program for broadcast in other markets, like Winnipeg and Regina. These broadcasts provided communities separated by immense distances with some common point of reference. It also helped to acquaint residents in one part of the country with the music of groups from another.

In the 1970s, full-time multi-lingual broadcasters entered the radio market. In Winnipeg, CKJS featured a daily Ukrainian program, which was soon followed by a similar program on CKER in Edmonton. These programs continue to broadcast Ukrainian music while also informing the Ukrainian listening audience of current affairs and public events.[25]

Ukrainian instrumental music is an integral part of Ukrainian life in western Canada. Once a popular form of leisure activity for many members of the community, it has increasingly become the realm of a shrinking body of specialists. Through live performance events like parties, dances, weddings, festivals and club dates, Ukrainian musicians have had intimate interaction with the listening community. Through the media of commercial recordings and broadcasting, musicians reach a wider audience while drawing the community closer together.

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[1] For a detailed discussion of Ukrainian immigration to Canada see Kaye and Swyripa 1982; Martynowych 1991; Marunchak 1970.

[2] It also coincides with the celebration of the millennium of Christianity in Ukraine. Many Polish born Ukrainians left Poland to attend millennium celebrations in Rome, and chose not to return to Poland. Of these a considerable number settled in Canada.

[3] For a discussion of music among the Bosnian Ukrainian community in Canada see Boychuk (1997). For an example of music among recent immigrants from Ukraine see Krasnoshtan (1998).

[4] Recorded interviews with K. Klym (1991), M. Stelmach (1991), N. Sandul (1991) and Kurylo et. al. (1992).

[5] The *hudok* was a four stringed, bowed instrument similar to the violin, but with a shorter and wider neck (Khotkevych 1929, 7-14).

[6] Recorded interviews with K. Klym (1991), M. Stelmach (1991), J. Laskowski (1991) and Kurylo et. al. (1992).

[7] Tkachyk, Joe. Unrecorded interview, June, 1992. Tkachyk recalls his first musical experiences in a mandolin orchestra organized by the teacher at the school in his home district near Vilna, Alberta. As part of the orchestra Tkachyk learned rudimentary musical skills which allowed him to later learn to play the violin.

[8] I use the term "instrumental music" to describe the activity of tese small dance bands. Although vocal performance becomes an increasingly important part of the repertoires of these groups, especially after the introduction of commercial sound recordings, performance of purely instrumental dance melodies continues to be a central component of their activity to the present day.

[9] Mattfield (1971,526), Shapiro (1965a, 249, 247, 579), and Shapiro (1965b,211) list polkas and waltzes on the American popular music charts such as the "Beer Barrel Polka" in 1939, "Charlie Was a Boxer" (based on the Polish folk song "Pocos Tuta Przyszedl") in 1948, "The Blue Skirt Waltz" (based on a Czech song by Vaclav Blaha) also in 1948, the Hop Scotch Polka in 1949 and the Liechtensteiner Polka in 1957.

[10] Two major forces influencing the popularity of the accordion in Ukrainian bands were Dave Roman of the D-Drifters (see Chapter 5) and Ron Cahute of Burya (see Chapter 7).

[11] See Chapter 5.

[12] While the music of Metro Radomsky's band was definitely rooted in rural and old country genres, it was influenced much more by the music of the "sweet" bands of the 1930s than any country music. Discussions in print of old time Ukrainian music, especially by writers from eastern Canada and the US, repeatedly refer to this music as Ukrainian "country and western," perhaps due in part to Klymasz's influential article in *Ethnomusicology* (1972).

[13] Joe Tkachyk, unrecorded interview, June 1991; Tommy Buick, unrecorded interview, April 1991; Jody Wacko unrecorded interview, September 1998. Wacko's father, Ukrainian violinist Jimmy Wacko, was profoundly influenced by the music of Don Messer. My own father and grandfather, both amateur fiddlers, were big fans of Messer and DeJarlis.

[14] Sometimes this payment was in the form of cash (for example Walter Gargus's band earned $12.00 per wedding in the 1930s, $25.00 - $40.00 in the 1940s, and $300.00 - $400.00 in 1979) (Gargus 1980,347), while at other times the musicians were paid with livestock (Oleksiuk 1983,664), sacks of grain (Panych 1982,609), or with credit towards groceries in the local store (Malayko 1980,445).

[15] It is interesting to note that occasionally when caterers are unable to offer Ukrainian dishes, the families of the bride or groom will supplement the meal with Ukrainian food prepared at home or purchased from another food service.

[16] A common variant of the fundraising dance was a basket or pie social (Farus 1980,266). Girls brought lunches which were then auctioned off, with the girl sharing her lunch with the highest bidder (Kashuba 1982,436-38).

[17] Nestor Shydlowsky. Unrecorded interview, August 1997. Shydlowsky moved to Winnipeg so that he could perform in the Ukrainian club scene.

[18] Bill Semeniuk. Recorded interview. June 1992.

[19] See Chapter Five.

[20] See Chapter Four.

[21] Alex Groshak. Recorded interview. April 1991.

[22] See Chapter Five.

[23] Henry Smichura. Unrecorded interview. July, 1991.

[24] Tommy Buick. Unrecorded interview, April 1991.

[25] Roman Brytan. Unrecorded interview, October, 1996.

# Chapter 4. Paul Humeniuk and the Development of a Ukrainian Music Canon

## *Charka, Roots and Repertoire*

Part of George Paleniuk's personal Ukrainian renaissance involved a rediscovery of all of the avenues of Ukrainian experience he had once been in tune with. Upon his decision to take an active role in performing music, he began research attempting to unearth what he perceived to be the traditional music of Ukrainians on the prairies. He did so by consulting with older musicians in the community, as well as exploring various archival collections of recorded and printed music. In all of his explorations, a name that repeatedly resurfaced was that of Pavlo Humeniuk.

For many of the Ukrainian musicians, especially violinists, who were actively performing in the 1940s and 1950s in Alberta, the music of Pavlo Humeniuk formed a cornerstone of their repertoire. Humeniuk's recordings were among the most popular, and many old musicians still own copies of the original 78 rpm discs.[1] Printed collections of musical scores also existed (Homeniuk 1938), and Paleniuk used these as a reference.

While Charka finally settled on a sound that was quite unlike that of Pavlo Humeniuk's, the music of this great master still was a significant influence. The band used material from his recordings to construct interludes in some of their own arrangements. Humeniuk's versions of traditional folk dance melodies, especially those designed with the repertoire of choreographer Vasyl' Avramenko in mind, continue to be a part of the repertoire of many Ukrainian bands in western Canada, including Charka. These deepest roots provided the foundation from which Charka began to develop their own unique repertoire.

***Development of Ethnic Recording***

Music has been one of the greatest forces for shaping the cultural identity of Ukrainians in North America. However, given the great effect that recorded music has had on shaping the cultural life of Ukrainians in North America, very little information exists regarding it. This is not unlike the trend in recorded music in general. For example, Malm states

> Considering the fact that sound recordings have been in existence for over on hundred years and have been an important mass medium since the 1920s, surprisingly little research has been done on them. Few attempts have been made to summarize what is known about the general importance of sound recordings in society as a whole and the world of music in particular. (1982, 49)

It is relatively recently that information has surfaced regarding the early ethnic recording industry. This is largely through the works of Gronow (1977), Greene (1994) and especially Spottswood (1982, 1990).

Even for those with little knowledge of Ukrainian language, the rhythms and textures of instrumental music genres help provide an accessible entry into the culture. Along with live community performances, one of the most dynamic media for the transmission of music has been the commercial recording industry. While this industry perhaps reached its peak activity in Canada in the 1960s (Klymasz 1972), Ukrainian music and Ukrainian recordings have featured prominently in the overall history of recorded music industry in North America since its earliest inception. And Ukrainian music's first "star" was among the most successful recording artists of his generation, in any musical genre.

It took almost twenty five years from Thomas Edison's invention of the "talking machine" in 1877 for the phonograph and recording industry to settle in as a viable form of home entertainment. Several patent suits and battles over standardization of formats played a role in this slow development. However, by World War I the phonograph had become an significant part of many American homes (Spottswood 1982, 53).

Included among the earliest recordings were products offered in languages other than English. A 1906 Columbia Records catalogue offered discs in German, Italian, French, Czech, Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, Polish, Hungarian, Hebrew, and Russian, with a note that an entirely separate catalogue was available for records in Spanish (Spottswood 1982, 54). By catering to the large population of recently arrived immigrants, the record companies, who were also manufacturing phonograph machines, cultivated an even wider base of customers. Much of the non-English material was drawn from overseas affiliates in London, Kyiv, Berlin and other large European cities (Spottswood 1982, 54). By 1920 the two largest record manufacturers, Columbia and Victor, had issued nearly 6, 000 ethnic records in a variety of languages, including Ukrainian.

In 1918, several patents owned almost exclusively by Victor and Columbia were declared invalid by the courts. This opened up the field for a number of other independent record companies. Of these, the Okeh and Brunswick companies were the largest, and they both also figured prominently in the field of ethnic recording (Spottswood 1982, 58). They also expanded the portions of the market producing music for African-American audiences (the so-called "race" records) and those catering to the white, southern (or "hillbilly") market. The activity of record companies in these markets would soon influence the way they dealt with their ethnic music divisions.

While increased competition had one kind of effect on the record industry, other factors were also influencing the type of records produced. The war in Europe made access to some of the former sources of material difficult. Consequently, the record companies had to begin cultivating local talent that could satisfy the needs of the non-English language market. Often this consisted of generic dance melodies that could be repackaged and marketed to a variety of European ethnic groups. Another consideration was the tastes of the consumers of recorded material. While European recordings of formally conventional performances of popular and standard material and concert arrangements of folk songs performed by trained singers appealed to part of the record-buying public, they failed to

reflect the tastes of those immigrants who had grown up in rural villages. For those immigrants struggling to adjust to a radically different life in the new world, the separation from their old world music and customs created a great emotional void. And significant part of that void was soon to be filled by a village violinist named Pavlo Humeniuk, with the assistance of entrepreneur Myron Surmach.

***Pavlo Humeniuk***

Pavlo Humeniuk was born in the town of Pidvolochys'ke, Ternopil oblast' in 1884. He began learning the violin at the age of six (Greene 1992, 87). He arrived in the United States around 1902 and settled in New York (Pomer Pavlo Humeniuk 1965). For a time, he studied violin with a Professor Makhnovetsky, a graduate of the St. Petersburg Conservatory (Spottswood 1993). Originally earning his living as a tanner (Greene 1992, 87), he eventually went on to open his own violin shop, where he built and repaired instruments until his retirement around 1960. However, it is primarily as a performer of old country village dance music that he is best remembered.

By the 1920s the large American record companies were looking for local talent to produce records for their ethnic music series. In 1925, New York book and music shop owner Myron Surmach had begun to carry recordings made by the Victor, Columbia and Okeh companies (Greene 1992, 86). In late 1925 a representative of the Okeh Record Company paid a visit to his store. The company had been trying to market a line of Ukrainian recordings produced from masters made in Europe, but were having little success. Since there were no recordings of Ukrainian village music, the man asked Surmach if there were any local musicians who could perform this type of music. Surmach introduced him to Humeniuk, and arrangements were made for Humeniuk's first recording session on December 3, 1925. He assembled a quartet consisting of clarinet, trombone piano and himself on violin. These first recordings, two kolomyikas and two kozachoks[2]

were well received. However, the Okeh Company failed to follow them up. Within a few weeks Humeniuk was under contract to the Columbia Record Company which wanted more of his village style music.

***Humeniuk's Recordings***

Humeniuk's recordings for the Columbia label cover a wide range of genres, although always connected with the village musical milieu. Dance genres such as the kozachok and kolomyika figure prominently in his body of work. Included among these are several kolomyiky with texts sung by Evhen Zukowsky. Named after various places in Humeniuk's native Galicia ("Ternopil's'ka Kolomyika," Skalats'ka Kolomyika," Zolochivs'ka Kolomyika," etc.), these tunes and their titles helped evoke a sense of place among members of his audience. He recorded music for popular social dances such as Arkan, Chaban and Hutsulka. His thematic recordings occasionally included elements of religious music from various church ceremonies. He also introduced elements from other musical traditions, such as that of the blind hurdy-gurdy players or lirnyky. [3]

Among Humeniuk's first recordings for the Columbia label were a series of works in conjunction with singers/comedians Evhen Zukowsky and Rosa Krasnowska. These recordings attempted to depict the entire scene of various Ukrainian village celebrations, matchmaking, weddings, christenings and parties. They were miniature plays featuring not only Humeniuk's instrumental dance melodies, but also the ritual songs and spoken texts that were an integral part of these events. The recordings were able to transmit the feelings and emotions of the Old World that many of the recent immigrants were trying desperately to recreate in their new home. The first of these such recordings,"Ukrains'ke Wesilia" sold over 150, 000 copies and influenced ethnic and non-ethnic recordings far beyond the field of Ukrainian-American music (Spottswood 1992, 3).[4] While relatively expensive for its time at $1.25, customers of various nationalities bought the record, perhaps recognizing

elements or the atmosphere of their own ritual celebrations, even if they couldn't understand the language (Spottswood 1982, 60). The popularity of this recording helped establish Humeniuk as a "star" not only among Ukrainians, but with other ethnic groups as well. Because he came from the western Ukrainian province of Galicia, he was also familiar with elements of Polish village music. Altering the spelling of his name to Pawel Humeniak, Columbia produced recordings from his repertoire of Polish dance melodies, with great success. His recording of "Polka Kanarek" was one of the best selling Polish titles of the time (Keil and Keil 1992, 25). If other such recordings sold well, they were sometimes redone and passed on to the Lithuanian and Slovak catalogues (Spottswood 1994).

***Humeniuk and the Avramenko Dance Repertoire***

Another important part of Humeniuk's body of recorded work connects him with another icon of Ukrainian culture in North America. In 1925, dancer/choreographer Vasyl' Avramenko arrived in Canada. He established a series of dance schools and presented concerts across North America, largely through his own personal touring. His choreography helped take regional village dances, and repackage them as a "national" art form. Largely through his efforts, an entire genre,"Ukrainian" stage dance, evolved. The cornerstone of this genre for several decades was the choreography of Avramenko.

Throughout his tours of North America, Avramenko trained not only dancers, but musicians as well. In order to perform his choreography he needed accompanying music. Avramenko often contracted the most skilled or most popular local musicians and taught them the musical material for his dances. This association often resulted in elevated status for the local musicians. For example, well-known Alberta violinist Metro Radomsky often used his connection to Avramenko as a way to publicize his own musical activity (Metro Radomsky 1981). However, it was not always possible in each location to find musicians

who were either skilled enough, or at liberty to devote large blocks of time to providing music for the dance schools. Avramenko, therefore, needed an alternative.

In order to guarantee quality accompanying music for his choreography, Avramenko turned to recordings by Pavlo Humeniuk. Humeniuk assembled musicians to record many of the dance tunes from Avramenko's repertoire.[5] The deal was mutually beneficial to both parties. Avramenko could now be more flexible in selecting locations for dance seminars, without having to rely on local musicians. The recordings provided precise versions of his repertoire, allowing him to focus his attention on choreography. For Humeniuk, this repertoire not only brought his music to a wider audience, but also helped solidify his position as the premier Ukrainian musician of his time.

A further effect of Humeniuk's association with Avramenko was the creation of a canon of acceptable repertoire. In the same way that Avramenko was able to transform regional vernacular dance into a homogenous national style, Humeniuk's recordings helped define what could be considered "Ukrainian" music. We have already noted that local musicians who performed with Avramenko enjoyed elevated status in their communities. Through his vastly popular body of recorded work, including the Avramenko material, Humeniuk enjoyed the highest status of all Ukrainian musicians. Consequently, local musicians wanting to enhance their position with their audiences performed their own versions of pieces from the Humeniuk and Avramenko repertoires. Since Avramenko had trained thousands of dancers across North America, there was a built in audience for this music.

### *Humeniuk's Influence on His Contemporaries*

Humeniuk's influence as a recording artist was multi-faceted, although he was primarily known as a specialist in village instrumental music. It is most likely due to the popularity of his recordings of instrumental dance music that other similar ensembles were

recorded by various American record labels. Performers such as Josef Pizio, M. Slobodian and his "Ukrainska Selska Orchestra," Samuil Pilip and his Lemkiwska Orchestra, Michael Thomas and his Ukrainian Orchestra, and others produced numerous recordings similar in nature to those of Humeniuk.[6]

In most of these recordings, the violin was featured prominently, usually as the main solo instrument. This helped to perpetuate the violin's role as the lead instrument in Ukrainian ensembles. For his recordings, Humeniuk employed a variety of session musicians. As a result, the instrumentation also varied from recording to recording. While he sometimes used a traditional line up of violin, tsymbaly and drum, other recordings were made featuring violin along with clarinet, piano and trombone; guitar, drum and tambourine; guitar and drum; trombone and piano; tsymbaly and string bass; two second violins and accordion; mandolin and guitar. As with the specific pieces from his repertoire, the instrumentation of his recordings also influenced local musicians.

***Recorded Skits***

Of Humeniuk's repertoire, three major genres are most notable. These are, 1) thematic recordings or "skits," featuring spoken texts, songs and instrumental melodies; 2) instrumental village dance melodies; and 3) accompaniments for Avramenko's dance repertoire. All three of these genres went on to become standards of the repertoire of Ukrainian bands.

Humeniuk followed the success of his skit recording "Ukrains'ke Wesilia" in 1926 with a series of other recordings based on ritual events, Svatannia, Zaruchyny, Vinkopletennia, Popravyny, Khrestyny.[7] Soon after their appearance, other groups began producing their own recorded versions of Ukrainian rituals and music. For example, a recording titled "Lemkovski Krestiny" was recorded in 1928 by V.P. Gladick (Hladick) i Kompaniia. (Spottswood 1989, 1055), and was followed by "Panachida," "Lemkovske

Vesilya," "Paska Voskresenie" and "Krestini Po Vojni" all recorded in 1928 by the Holy Trinity Church Choir (Spottswood 1989, 1070)

Like the Avramenko dance repertoire, many of Humeniuk's recorded skits were later re-created by local musicians. It is particularly important to note the activity of the "Interlake Polka Kings" of Manitoba. This group was extremely popular in the 1960s throughout western Canada. Like Avramenko, and later the Mickey & Bunny/ D-Drifters-5 troupe, the group went out on extended tours of Ukrainian settlements in western Canada (Interlake Polka Kings 1966). A large part of their popularity was based on their repertoire of dance melodies and humorous songs, many which came directly from the repertoire of Pavlo Humeniuk. These pieces were included on a number of long play recordings, along with other popular dance tunes.

Based on the success of small town acts like the Interlake Polka Kings, other rural bands mounted stage productions and produced recordings featuring Humeniuk or Humeniuk-like skits. Peter Lamb and his "Sundown Pals" of Oakburn, Manitoba took their own production of a Ukrainian wedding on tour to Alberta, [8] while musicians such as Tommy Buick, [9] Bill Prokopchuk, [10] Roy Mykytyshyn, [11] and Auntie Mary[12] all produced their own recordings simulating the wedding events.

***The Effect of the Humeniuk/Avramenko Recordings on Future Generations***

The Avramenko repertoire was not only performed at live events. In the 1950s, new groups began recording this material, often reproducing Humeniuk's arrangements. Artists such as Jim Gregorash in Manitoba[13] and Metro Radomsky in Alberta produced recordings of the Avramenko dances that were similar in structure to those of Humeniuk, but placed a greater emphasis on the traditional village instrumentation of violin, tsymbaly and drum.

In the 1960s a third generation of musicians began recording the Avramenko material. The well-known group the D-Drifters-5[14] were responsible for popularizing this

body of music with new audiences. In 1965 they produced an album of Ukrainian dance melodies that featured six of the Avramenko dance melodies.[15] Also included on this album were other instrumental pieces that had previously been recorded by Humeniuk. The recordings differed radically from Humeniuk's originals in that they now employed the electronic instruments available to musicians of the time, electric guitar and bass as well as electronic accordion. In doing so, the group mirrored Humeniuk's process of contemporizing previous material while retaining its inherent structure and function. These recordings were as historically important as their predecessors. They were equally well received by both older and younger generations of Ukrainian Canadians. Numerous Ukrainian dance ensembles that sprang up across western Canada in the 1960s and later used this recording during rehearsals and performances. According to Dave Romanyshyn of the D-Drifters-5, this recording sold over 100, 000 copies throughout North America, Australia and Europe. Musicians across Canada adopted the style of the D-Drifters-5 who themselves became recording stars much like Humeniuk had decades earlier.

In the 1970s many other bands added the melodies of Avramenko dances to their record albums. However, rather than identifying them as "Avramenko's Dances" they were now referred to as "traditional" or "folk" dances. Even fiddler Al Cherny of "The Tommy Hunter Show" made a recording of Ukrainian dance music that featured several of the Avramenko/Humeniuk melodies.[16]

The Avramenko repertoire continues to be recorded up to the present.[17] In 1995 Baba's Records of Winnipeg issued a cassette recording by "The Group Five" entitled "Ukrainian Folk Dances" which includes eleven of the Avramenko/Humeniuk dance melodies, also including two dances an a wedding march which were not part of the Avramenko repertoire, much like the D-Drifters-5 recording. A recent recording by the "Musical Knights Orchestra" also includes a number of these dance tunes.[18]

***Humeniuk's "Canon" Defines Community***

The early Ukrainian immigrants to Canada had a low level of national awareness. While they identified with their local or regional identities, for them national consciousness was not an important factor (Procko 1979). In fact, many may had simply been innocent of the very existence of the terms "Ukraine" and "Ukrainian" (Klymasz 1976, 202; cf. Stein and Hill 1977, 23). Their musical culture would have consisted of the songs and dances known in their native villages, perhaps including those from neighbouring villages. With the appearance of commercial recordings containing tunes identified as "Ukrainian," this music now had a national focus.

Recordings by Humeniuk and some of his contemporaries have formed a "canon" of acceptable works. Because of their overwhelming popularity, these recordings came to define what Ukrainian music is for many generations of other musicians. These melodies have been recorded and continue to be recorded many times over. In some cases, the new recordings of this material have matched or exceeded the level of popularity of the original works by Humeniuk. Many of the dance melodies continue to be part of the standard repertoire for contemporary dance bands, often providing them with their most salient markers of Ukrainian identity.

Plate 1 has been removed because of copyright restrictions

Plate 1: Pavlo Humeniuk. From "Pawlo Humeniuk: King of the Ukrainian Fiddlers." Arhoolie Folklyric CD 7025

Plate 2: Label from Pavlo Humeniuk's recording of "Vinkopletyny", one of the follow-ups to his hit record "Ukrains'ke Vesillia."

Plate 3: Label from Pavlo Humeniuk's recording of "Kozachok Podil's'kyi, number 1" Beneath the main title is the added note "Tanky V. Avramenka [Dances of V. Avramenko]".

[1] Joe Tkachyk, unrecorded interview, June 1972.
[2] For descriptions of these dance genres see Nahachewsky (1985).
[3] See Pavlo Humeniuk, "Do Poczajewa Na Widpust," Columbia,107739-2/27091, 1927.
[4] See Recorded Examples 1 and 2.
[5] See Recorded Example 6.
[6] For examples of these artists, see "Ukrainian Village Music, Historical recordings 1928-1933" Arhóolie/Folklyric CD 7030.
[7] See Plate 2.
[8] Peter Lamb and his Sundown Pals. "Simulated Live Recording of a Genuine Manitoba Ukrainian "Country Style" Wedding." V Records, VLP 3021. See Recorded Example 4.
[9] "Tommy Buick Presents a Ukrainian Wedding, Volume 1" V Records, VLP 3002 and "Volume 2" V Records, VLP 3006.
[10] "Bill Prokopchuk Plays a Simulated Live Recording of a Three Day Ukrainian Wedding Old Country Style." Galaxy Records, GLP 1004. See Recorded Example 3.
[11] Roy Mykytyshyn "Marriage and Married Life Ukrainian Style," V Records VLP 3090.
[12] "Auntie Mary Goes to a Ukrainian Wedding." V Records VLP 3108. See Recorded Example 5.
[13] Jim Gregorash "Chumak" Regis Records.
[14] See Chapter 5.
[15] D-Drifters-5 "D-Drifters-5 Play Ukrainian Dance Favourites" V-Records VLP 3029. See Recorded Example 7.
[16] Al Cherny "Golden Ukrainian Memories" TeeVee Records TA-1017.
[17] These melodies were recorded beyond the boundaries of North America. The Argentinean group "Los 4 Ases" produced a recording that included both "Kozak Podilskey" and "Kozatchok Kolomeika." Los 4 Ases "Vol. 2." Discos Super Trino, B.C. 2406.
[18] Musical Knights Orchestra "Ukrainian Melodies and Dances" MKO-98. See Recorded Example 8.

# Chapter 5. Ukrainian Country Music as a Symbol of Ukrainian Identity in the 1960s

***Charka, Alberta is "Country" Country***

For many Ukrainians in rural areas of Alberta, two parallel musical systems converge to provide a musical identity for their communities. Many have a continued appreciation for the village musical traditions brought to Canada by the first waves of Ukrainian immigrants. This rural music still speaks of their experience. At the same time, they are increasingly influenced by another rural genre of music, that of mainstream country music.

When Charka was establishing itself as a band, it was acutely aware of the influence that mainstream country music has on the musical tastes of Albertans. They realized that in order to be able to address Ukrainian audiences across the province, and especially in the rural areas, country music would have to form a significant part of their repertoire. While the majority of the group members were not particular fans of country music, they were fortunate to have one member, Barry Sliwkanich, who lived in a rural area and who could monitor the tastes of rural audiences.

Charka made a careful attempt to perform the kind of country music that they felt would produce for them the most positive response among rural audiences. Still, there was a perception that the group was a "city band" and therefore not in tune with what rural listeners wanted to hear. George Paleniuk made a concerted effort to change this perception. He monitored rural newspapers, looking for announcements of community dances. Having identified communities where the band would like to perform, Paleniuk sent promotional packages to the organizers of these events. The packages highlighted actual performances of the band, featuring examples of the kind of country music they could perform. By satisfying rural organizers that his group was versatile enough to perform not only traditional Ukrainian music, but also contemporary country, Charka gained an entry to another sub-stratum of the western Canadian Ukrainian community.

***Ukrainian Community in the 1960s***

During the 1960s, the Ukrainian community in Canada was at a crucial turning point. The community was experiencing a transformation from an immigrant folk heritage based on an old world complex, to an ethnic culture reflecting elements of the old and new worlds. This cultural change corresponded with the transformation of the Ukrainian immigrant colony on the prairies into an integrated segment of the total Canadian population (Klymasz 1980, 122-23).

A microcosm of the Ukrainian community can be seen in the music and activity of a Ukrainian-Canadian singing duo known as "Mickey and Bunny." Between 1964 and 1966 this duo and their back-up group, the D-Drifters-5, performed in concerts and made recordings of traditional Ukrainian folk songs and also introduced a new brand of Ukrainian country and western and Ukrainian rock and roll. To help understand the significance of this music in relationship to the Ukrainian community in Canada in the 1960s, it is necessary to take a brief look at some social processes taking place among Ukrainians in Canada at that time.

The Ukrainian community in Canada of the 1960s was a diverse group, as a result of the interaction between the various waves of immigration. The first wave settlers were nearing retirement age. Their children and grandchildren were leaving the rural areas in search of education and employment opportunities in the cities. In doing so, they were also leaving behind many of the customs and practices of their parents, including their traditional music, and assimilating into the Canadian mainstream.

The third wave immigrants were also beginning to integrate themselves into the Canadian society. However, being more politicized, especially in terms of Ukrainian nationalism, they were more interested in maintaining customs and insisting that their children do so as well (Luciuk 1991, 227). Since they did not have to expend as much

energy building schools and churches as did the first two waves of immigrants, they could place more of an emphasis on other community activities (Luciuk 1991, 203-204).

*Use of Language*

One can get an idea of the nature of the Ukrainian community during the 1960s by looking at data dealing with language retention. Information gathered from material from the 1961 Canada census showed that 473, 337 Canadians claimed Ukrainian ancestry. Of this group, 361, 496 or 64.4% listed Ukrainian as their mother tongue. By the 1971 census, these figures had dropped to 309, 860 out of 580, 660, or 48.9%. In 1971 only 132, 535, or 22.8 % listed Ukrainian as the language most often spoken at home. This was a new question on the 1971 census, and therefore similar data was not available for previous years. (Darcovych and Yuzyk, 221-239)

These figures help illustrate the fact that although the use of Ukrainian language was an important indicator of Ukrainian identity at the beginning of the 1960s, it was considerably less important by the beginning of the next decade. However, the importance of the Ukrainian language, and the interplay between the various factions within the Ukrainian community at this point in time provided the backdrop for what would perhaps be the most innovative development to ever take place in Ukrainian music in Canada.

***Country & Pop music scene in early 1960s***

In order to understand the development of the Mickey and Bunny sound, and why it had such an impact, we should look at developments in both the pop and country music scenes that influenced it.

During the 1960s, the mainstream North American music scene experienced an onset of new musical styles, both in the fields of country and popular music. During the

1950s, both streams of music had increasingly adopted an easy-listening format, attempting to make their products more palatable to a wider audience (Malone, 230). These new movements of the 1960s were a reaction against this bland homogeneity.

The major establishment of American country music was centred around Nashville, and the "Nashville Sound," consisting of slick, elaborate arrangements featuring accompaniment by full orchestras and choirs, was the standard of the day. However, in the early 1960s an alternative style was making a serious challenge to the Nashville sound. This new brand of country music originated in the studios of Bakersfield, California. Its best known proponents were Buck Owens and Merle Haggard. To many critics, the Bakersfield sound was the progressive sound in country music (Brown 1986, 138; Dawidoff 1997).

The Bakersfield sound was a departure from the slick production of Nashville and marked a partial return to the small band sound of traditional country music. Two of the trademarks of this new sound which differentiated it from traditional country were a walking bass line played on the electric bass (previously the acoustic double bass was used) and a strong rhythm provided by the drums, which had previously been seldom used in Nashville (Malone 294-295).

***British Invasion***

The pop music world also underwent a profound change in musical style with the advent of the so-called "British Invasion." This "invasion" was caused primarily by the success of the Beatles, who were followed to North America by several other groups. It is widely believed that the success of these groups lay primarily in the fact that they were also a backlash against over-produced pop music. While the U.S. music market was experiencing some degree of musical drought, in Britain several young groups of musicians were discovering the works of the early American rock and roll and rhythm and

blues artists. Groups such as the Beatles were taking this music and reworking it for British audiences.

There are similarities between the development of the rock and roll style of groups like the Beatles and the country style of the Bakersfield school. It is widely agreed that the Beatles matured as a performing unit during their stint in the clubs of Hamburg, while the Bakersfield musicians such as Owens and Haggard played to audiences of oil field and farm labour workers. Both styles featured a return to simpler musical elements and a rejection of the overproduction that had become the standard for their respective genres (Brown 1986, 137-139).

***"Mickey & Bunny and the D-Drifters-5"***

In the early 1960s a husband and wife singing duo known as "Mickey and Bunny" were performing as a country act in clubs around Winnipeg. Modest Sklepowich ("Mickey Sheppard") was a pharmacist and his wife Orysia Evanchuk ("Bunny Evans") was a substitute school teacher. Sklepowich had played with a band called the "Sons of the Golden West" around his home town of Ethelbert, Manitoba, worked as a disc jockey at radio station CKDM in Dauphin, Manitoba, and had compiled a large repertoire of Ukrainian folk songs collected and polished in performances at country dances.[1] Mickey and Bunny began their recording career when Winnipeg record producer Alex Groshak heard them performing their country and western act an ' approached them to record some versions of their music in Ukrainian.[2]

With the discovery of Mickey and Bunny, Groshak launched a new record label, V-Records, which was initially devoted to Ukrainian artists. Eventually the label repackaged and distributed work by German, Polish and Scandinavian artists, as well as American polka acts such as Frankie Yankovic.

Mickey and Bunny teamed up with a young Winnipeg dance band known as the D-Drifters-5. The group was comprised of Dave Romanyshyn (Dave Roman), leader, accordion and electric bass; Tony Romanyshyn (Tony Roman), electric guitar and bass; Ihor 'Yogi' Klos, violin, Mike Klym, drums and Andy Pacholinski (Al Tenner), tenor saxophone. The group had been performing at community dances and Ukrainian weddings around Winnipeg. They came into contact with Sklepowich through Tony Romanyshyn.

When Sklepowich pitched the idea of a cross-Canada tour and recording possibilities to the group, they agreed to join him as his back-up group. Pacholinski, however, was also a member of the Canadian Armed Forces band stationed in Winnipeg, and was not able to travel with the group. He continued to perform with the group on local dance dates and on the D-Drifters-5 recordings. This left the touring group as a four piece band, electric guitar, electric bass, violin and drums, with Sklepowich adding acoustic rhythm guitar.

***Sound***

The Mickey and Bunny act was built on two main strengths, the ability to perform traditional Ukrainian folk songs and dance music, and the ability to perform accurate covers of contemporary country and rock and roll hits with Ukrainian lyrics.

The single most important feature of the Mickey and Bunny sound was the way in which they moved back and forth between singing English and Ukrainian lyrics within the same piece of music. They employed this technique with great success in their renditions of popular country and western hits of the time.[3] They would often begin a piece in English, then move to verses translated into Ukrainian. The group coined the phrase "half *na piv*" [half and half] songs in order to describe this style (*piv* is the Ukrainian word for half). The phrase "half *na piv*" has since become a popular term among Ukrainian Canadians to describe any macaronic song or manner of speech. (Oryshchuk)

The Ukrainian translations were remarkably close to their English counterparts. They are quite precise in their use of Ukrainian grammar and syntax, while at the same time retaining the flavour of the English variant. Most of the translations were done by the duo themselves, often with the assistance of Mickey's father, William Sklepowich.

The Mickey and Bunny sound was a variation of the Bakersfield country style. Their instrumentation featured drums and electric bass, with fiddle or electric guitar taking melodic breaks. In most cases the bass guitar played walking accompaniment patterns. Even country songs which originally came from outside this school were given this treatment. It is perhaps due to the fact that they were a self-contained touring unit that the Mickey and Bunny group chose this particular style. At the same time, however, it showed them to be on the cutting edge as far as country music was concerned, helping them compete with other non-Ukrainian groups for concert audiences and radio air-time.

The singing style used by Mickey and Bunny was congruous with that of the country music they were imitating. They both sang most often in the upper part of their registers, employing a somewhat nasal "twang." This singing style was even carried over to their interpretation of Ukrainian folk songs, and became a personal trademark.[4] They often harmonized together in thirds, with additional vocal harmonies added by members of the D-Drifters-5. High pitched harmony in thirds was also a trademark component of Buck Owens' brand of Bakersfield country music (Malone, 293). Their recordings occasionally featured Bunny harmonizing with herself, accomplished by sound on sound overdubs, also never heard in Ukrainian music before this time.

Although Sklepowich was the primary motivating force in this ensemble, much credit for the unique nature of the group's sound must go to the D-Drifters-5. They not only provided the contemporary country accompaniment that Sklepowich wanted for his portion of the show, but also performed Ukrainian covers of contemporary rock and roll hits and developed their own unique versions of Ukrainian folk melodies. Although they

were among the first groups to add electronic sounds to Ukrainian music, mostly generated by the Cord-O-Vox accordion, their arrangements and repertoire of Ukrainian folk songs and dance melodies remained quite faithful to the Old Country variants.[5] They also added convincing versions of hits of the Beatles and other rock groups to their repertoire just weeks after the songs were being released.[6]

The strength of the band was the versatility of its members. Dave Romanyshyn, while an exceptional accordionist, was also an adequate bassist. Tony Romanyshyn was able to play the lead guitar styles of either rock or country music. 'Yogi' Klos was a classically trained violinist who was familiar with Ukrainian folk styles, but could also play country fiddle licks. He was also featured as lead vocalist on many of the band's pieces. Mike Klym, besides drumming and singing, performed stand-up comedy routines during the concert programs.

***Presentation***

Mickey and Bunny rose to prominence primarily through two media, phonograph recordings and public performance, although they also made numerous radio and television appearances. (Brown 1965)

***Tours***

Mickey and Bunny's success was largely built upon their constant public exposure among Ukrainian communities, especially in western Canada. In 1964 and 1965 they mounted several tours through the Ukrainian bloc settlements of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, performing in most of the small towns and rural settlements where there was a Ukrainian population. Their first tour came at a time when these communities were still relatively isolated. Television had not yet moved outside larger urban centres. The small size of most of these towns also caused them to be bypassed by most other touring shows. The Mickey and Bunny group found a large population hungry for entertainment.

Since most of the community halls in these rural prairie towns were only used for local events, their operators were unprepared for the arrival of a professional touring company. Consequently, Sklepowich was able to secure these halls for a minimal fee. By offering free tickets, he was also able to enlist volunteers to work as cashiers and ticket sellers, to set up seating and to clean up after the shows. By the time of their second western tour, these same operators were aware of the large profits made by Sklepowich, and charged him a considerably larger fee for the same services.[7]

The audiences for the Mickey and Bunny shows were treated to a "total" entertainment package. The crowd was often warmed up with some polkas performed by the D-Drifters-5. The main "concert" portion of the program would be introduced by a local radio personality. Following the concert, the crowd was invited to remain for dancing to the music of the D-Drifters-5, while Mickey took the opportunity to work the crowd selling records and souvenir books.[8]

***Promotion***

Another promotional technique borrowed from mainstream country music industry was that of the live in-store performance (Cornfield and Fallwell 1976, 81).[9] In advance to a performance date, Sklepowich would contact the largest store in the community and arrange a promotional performance. The entire troupe would set up in the store and perform a short set, then Sklepowich would sell records while the D-Drifters-5 continued to perform.

In order to obtain further inexpensive promotion, Sklepowich would visit local radio stations. He would hire one of the disc jockeys to act as M.C. for their concert performance. In return, the disc jockeys would promote the concert and play his recordings during their programs.

***Costumes***

Since most Ukrainian dance bands often consisted of any members of the local community who could play instruments, they would not dress in costumes to perform. In most cases they dressed no differently than their audiences at a wedding or dance.

The Mickey and Bunny group put emphasis on professional costuming. Mickey usually performed in a tuxedo, uncommon for Ukrainian males at the time, certainly in the rural areas, while Bunny wore custom designed dresses which reflected the fashions of the day. The D-Drifters-5 wore matching suits similar to the type made popular by the Beatles, often changing costumes between sets.

***Stage set-up***

Stage set up was also a consideration for this act. In a traditional setting, performances were often loose and casual. Musicians would stand with their instruments if they need to move to follow the flow of ritual activity, such as at a wedding, (Lysenko 1955, 52) but for the most part they would be seated since they were required to play day and night, for three consecutive days, the length of an average Ukrainian wedding (Roshkevych and Franko 1970, 75). When the majority of Ukrainian families adopted the single day wedding format with a reception held in a community hall, musicians still sat to perform, often behind wooden music stands, mirroring the style of North American dance bands.

The Mickey and Bunny show was designed to imitate contemporary rock and roll or country shows. All the performers, except for the drummer, stood to play. Musicians could change positions on stage, especially when featured as soloists. Staging effects such as coloured lighting, drum risers and special curtains were also all utilized.

***Recordings***

Recording was the second field which helped popularize the Mickey and Bunny sound. During this time they recorded two albums featuring translations of country and western hits, one album of translations of English gospel music, two albums of Christmas carols (one of traditional Ukrainian carols and one of translations of English carols), and one album of a "Simulated Live Performance." During the same time the D-Drifters-5 recorded two albums of Ukrainian folk songs, one of Ukrainian dance melodies, and one of Beatles and other rock hits translated into Ukrainian.[10] These recordings were produced in a studio set up in the basement of Sklepowich's home.

Since V-Records is a small, family run business, it is difficult to obtain exact figures regarding the number of units sold of each Mickey and Bunny album. However there are indications that their albums sold in the tens of thousands (Klymasz 1980, 94). Based on this success, an entire Ukrainian recording industry evolved in western Canada. The V-Records catalogue grew to over 150 items, while competing labels such as Heritage, Galaxy, U.K, Sunshine and Baba's Records all issued albums featuring western Canadian Ukrainian artists (Fredriksen 1985, 227-298).

The Mickey and Bunny touring shows and recordings, especially their first two albums "Ukrainian Country Music," and "Mickey and Bunny Sing 'This Land Is Your Land'" were so widely popular that their style and repertoire were copied by countless acts. As was the case with Woody Guthrie's original "This Land Is Your Land," the Mickey and Bunny translation became so popular that it passed from the realm of composition into the what was considered the body of folk songs. It has been performed by soloists, small groups, and even choirs.[11]

***Inherent messages***

The music created by the Mickey and Bunny troupe between 1964 and 1966 provides us a snapshot of the Ukrainian community in Canada at that time. Through their

insistence on performing a large body of Ukrainian folk songs, and on translating contemporary pieces into Ukrainian, the group recognized the importance the Ukrainian language still held for this community. However, by introducing both new repertoire and new performance techniques, they were recognizing the changes which were taking place within the community. The integration of Ukrainian lyrics into North American musical styles coincided with the integration of the Ukrainian population into North American society.

As we have seen, by the end of the 1960s use of Ukrainian language was declining among Canadians of Ukrainian heritage. The end of this decade also marked a decline in the interest in the brand of music performed by Mickey and Bunny. However, for a short period of time, the Mickey and Bunny group helped to bridge the gap between those who spoke Ukrainian and those who did not. In their live concerts, senior members of the community who wanted to hear Old Country songs and their grand-children who preferred the Beatles could both be satisfied. One of the aims of the group was to introduce Ukrainian language to the younger generations (Brown 1965). It was an effort that was appreciated by those who wished their children to speak Ukrainian (Oryshchuk 1965).

The music of Mickey and Bunny also helped create unity among Ukrainians from the various waves of immigration. While the third wave immigrants maintained a deep commitment to their national folk art, they also sought to familiarize their young with classical culture (Subtelny 1991, 228). This often caused tension when contrasted with the lighter entertainment preferred by the first two waves of immigrants (cf. Pohorecky 1984, 130). All the members of the Mickey and Bunny troupe were descendants of these first two waves of immigrants, however, with their performances on national television, (Brown 1965) and their status as recording "stars," (Klymasz 1980, 92) they provided a model that the entire Ukrainian community could be relate to.

The success of Mickey and Bunny helped to initiate a surge in activity among Ukrainian performing groups, especially in the field of recording. However, their success,

over time, also had a negative effect. Whereas the singing of folk songs was once a dynamic component of Ukrainian culture, the appearance of well-produced commercial recordings relegated the audience to the role of passive observer rather than active participant (Klymasz 1980, 92).

### *Conclusion*

The Mickey and Bunny/D-Drifters-5 troupe were only together for two years. In that time they toured western Canada extensively, made an extended tour through eastern Canada and the United States, and recorded six albums jointly, and four more featuring the D-Drifters-5 alone.

After their split, which resulted from financial disputes, the D-Drifters went on to a successful career based on their ability to play music for dancing. Eventually they made their way into rock music, and became one of the top draws on the Manitoba club circuit.[12] Mickey and Bunny, on the other hand, continued to make Ukrainian-English hybrid albums, but did not enjoy nearly the success of the years between 1964-66. The market had been saturated both by themselves and by their numerous imitators. As well, local operators were no longer interested in assisting Sklepowich unless they were offered a larger piece of the action.

The music produced by the Mickey and Bunny group between 1964 and 1966 continues to enjoy some popularity. Their songs still appear on Ukrainian language radio shows. Their albums have recently been repackaged by V-Records in cassette format, and are available at Ukrainian book and gift stores throughout western Canada. Their music has been the subject of scholarly studies (Klymasz 1972) and a very important part of the musical fabric of Ukrainians in Canada.

INTERNATIONALLY KNOWN

# UKRAINIAN CANADIAN SINGERS

# MICKEY AND BUNNY

## UKRAINIAN CONCERT

CANADA'S TOP UKRAINIAN V-RECORDING ARTISTS

SINGING TRADITIONAL UKRAINIAN AND TRANSLATED COUNTRY AND WESTERN SONGS IN UKRAINIAN

FEATURING THE

## D-DRIFTERS-5

**YOU'VE NEVER HEARD**

UKRAINIAN SONGS AND MUSIC PLAYED THIS WAY BEFORE

HEAR NEW SONGS LIKE
THIS IS OUR LAND — HOME BREW
PEEYAKI — PORTKEE — COTTON FIELDS
CIGARETTES, WHISKEY AND WILD WOMEN
OUT BEHIND THE BARN — BROWN EYES
WEDDING SONGS — AND DOZENS MORE

**FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT**

**ADDED FEATURE**

THRILL TO THE BREATHTAKING PULSATING RHYTHM OF THE

## UKRAINIAN DANCERS

# КОНЦЕРТ

**Послухайте щось нового, українські співаки канадійської слави.**
**Це щось надзвичайне, це є передача українських пісень на новий лад.**
**Маловідомі пісні, комедійка, жарт, сміх і серйозні хвилини.**

## ЩОСЬ НОВОГО

Plate 4: Poster for Mickey & Bunny Concert, circa 1964.

Plate 5 has been removed because of copyright restrictions

Plate 5: Mickey 7 Bunny record jacket, circa 1965. Compare the attempt at serious, refined presentation here with the more light-hearted, backwoods presentation of the Royal Polka Kings below

Plate 6 has been removed because of copyright restrictions.

Plate 6: Royal Polka Kings record jacket, circa 1968

Plate 7: D-Drifters-5 publicity photo, circa 1964. Used by permission.

Plate 8: D-Drifters-5 publicity photo, circa 1965. Used by permission.

[1] For a brief biography of Sheppard see "Mickey Sings Ukrainian-English Beer Parlour Songs." V Records VLP 3064.
[2] See Recorded Example 9.
[3] See Recorded Example 10.
[4] See Recorded Example 11.
[5] See Chapter 4. See Recorded Example 12.
[6] See Chapter 9. See Recorded Example 14.
[7] Mike Klym, the D-Drifters' drummer, notes that on the first tour, halls could be rented for fees between $5 and $25, while by the second tour they were charged $100-200 for those same venues.
[8] Mike Klym, recalled that Sklepowich purchased his copies of record albums from V-Records for approximately $1.70 and retailed them at $4.00. Of the $1.70 he paid, he was also entitled to an artist's royalty. Klym approximates that from 100 to 400 records were sold per night.
[9] Country star Ernest Tubb was the owner of a famous music store in Nashville which featured weekly Saturday night performances by himself and other country stars who were promoting new products.
[10] See Discography below.
[11] Bill and Pearl Malayko. Recorded interview. Edmonton. March 1992. Pearl often sings this piece accompanied by Bill on the *tsymbaly*. They note that the Ukrainian Senior Citizens Choir of Andrew, Alberta also have this piece in their repertoire.
[12] Mike Klym. Klym states that while most club bands would make approximately $150-250.00 per week in the early 1970s, the D-Drifters could demand over $1000.00 with weekends off to perform one night shows at other venues.

# Chapter 6. Culture, Ethnicity and the Montreal Scene

***Charka, We're a Ukrainian Band***

George Paleniuk started the band Charka as a result of his re-entry into Ukrainian community life as a "born again Ukrainian." For Paleniuk, rediscovery of his ethnic roots was sense of pride. It also opened several interesting avenues for him. He began connecting with people in various sub-groups of the Ukrainian community. He also began researching sources for Ukrainian music. The result was the development of a band which, although able to perform many styles of music, is predominantly recognized as a Ukrainian band.

Part of Charka's activity is based on Paleniuk's interest in finding old songs that were once popular but have now fallen out of favour, old songs that he feels could still appeal to contemporary audiences

> After half a year I thought to myself, yeah, we probably could be a little like cultural ambassadors, if we select what we play. And stuff that's not really common, some of it we could revive, like restore the music. We could be doing that.[1]

Another of the band's strengths is its versatility, the ability to balance urban and rural genres of Ukrainian music with contemporary mainstream music. Their command of literary Ukrainian language and proficiency at singing Ukrainian lyrics with proper accent and inflection has won them many fans. Language is one of the main things, along with the use of distinctly recognizable Ukrainian instruments like the tsymbaly, that identifies Charka as a Ukrainian band.

> One of the things that's happening now with Myrnam and Vermilion,[2] out of one wedding last year we got four bookings. And the reason as much as anything, a lot of these people that came from the country, there's no jobs, they're going back there. . .back to the country. So you've got, you know, the aged 25 to 40 crowd, in a lot of these places that . . . and I'm kinda thinking it may have something to do with Cahute,[3] some of the stuff they're buying, you know, to listen to that's vocal driven, because for the longest time you didn't have stuff that's vocal. For whatever reason a lot of these people want the language again. And to be able to talk, you know, clean Ukrainian or to sing a lot of stuff that they know instrumental, there's a source of pride there. And that's one reason we've been getting a lot of these country ones. We've been told that.[4]

Questions of language, rural and urban musical genres, and the development of a Ukrainian identity through music were brought to the fore during the 1970s. At this time several cultural movements were taking place which appear to coincide. Academics in the United States were discussing the rise of ethnic and political awareness among people of southern and eastern European heritage. At roughly the same time, members of non-English and non-French ethnic groups in Canada were also flexing their ethnic and political muscles in order to gain recognition of their contributions to the development of the country. The result was a federal policy of multiculturalism, which subsequently encouraged activity among ethnic groups. Finally, young people throughout North America were also exhibiting their collective strength through political demonstrations and cultural media. While these movements may not have all directly influenced each other, the fact that they all emerged at roughly the same point in time suggests that similar forces were at work in the society.

While all this social action was taking place, the youth of the Ukrainian community of Montreal were also establishing a unique identity. This identity was presented to the rest of North America through the activity of young bands who were blending traditional and contemporary musical material to create yet other new forms of Ukrainian music, new modes of presentation, and a new record company to distribute their message.

***New Ethnicity***

North America was experiencing an ethnic reawakening in the 1960s and 1970s (Colburn and Pozzetta 1979). Part of that reawakening included a discussion within the scholarly community of an emerging self-knowledge and the political and cultural forces at work among members of the third and fourth generation of southern and eastern European immigrants, which was branded the "New Ethnicity" (Novak 1979).

There are two distinct streams at work in the New Ethnicity. One focuses on the development of a form of ethnic culture that is different from that of immigrant

communities, while the other stresses the potential political power white ethnic groups could possess. Although most scholarly discussions of the New Ethnicity focus predominantly on the social situation in the United States in the late 1960s and early 1970s, there are direct and applicable correlations with Canadian society at approximately the same time.

Michael Novak was among the first to discuss the concept of the New Ethnicity as a political force (1971). According to Novak, the New Ethnicity does not entail elements connected with traditional views of ethnicity such as,

> (a) speaking in a foreign language; (b) living in a subculture; (c) living in a "tight knit" ethnic neighborhood; (d) belonging to fraternal organizations; (e) responding to "ethnic" appeals; (f) exalting one's own nationality or culture, narrowly construed. (1979a, 17)

Instead, Novak views the New Ethnicity as a political process whose prime function is to effect a shift in power. Novak's New Ethnics experience a discomfort with a "universalist, melted" identity that is "like everyone else"; they have a growing appreciation for the potential wisdom of gut reactions and historical roots; a growing self-confidence in social power; a sense of being discriminated against; and a sense of injustice regarding response to conflicts between ethnic groups (1979a, 17-18).

According to Stein and Hill,"The impulse to create culture anew rises from a crisis in the existing culture." They view the New Ethnicity as one of several responses to societal problems, a way of questioning prevailing norms and values much like the Youth Movement, the Black Power Movement, the Women's Movement, and others, diffusing many diverse elements into the mainstream, and in the process de-radicalizing and de-ethnicizing them (1977, 5; 207-8). For example, socioligist Peter Rose (1964) suggests that some white ethnics supported the black revolution in the United States because it challenged old stereotypes and racism. Stein and Hill propose diffusing racism by identifying one's self before others do it to you, suggesting that through an overt display of ethnicity,"what was once a badge of shame becomes a badge of pride." (1977, 171) In fact, they look upon the entire New Ethnicity movement as a counter-culture (1977, 160).

These sentiments are echoed by Ukrainian Canadian writer Jars Balan who says "I see Ukrainian and all other folk cultures as potential counter cultures, agents of resistance (even of subversion) within the mass culture or the current ruling definition of culture" (Lupul 1984 176-77).

For some, expressions of ethnic identity involve a distinctive advantage or disadvantage, and declaring one's ethnicity is frequently a strategy for defending the advantage or overcoming the disadvantage (Glazer and Moynihan 1979, 35). It is Novak's belief that the group he calls PIGS (Poles, Italians, Greeks, Slavs) (1973, 24) could gain an increased amount of political power if they consolidated efforts, drawing from the traditional strengths and values of their individual cultures.

A second stream within New Ethnicity involves a renewed awareness in, or rediscovery of traditional culture. In such discussions, the term culture is not restricted only to the arts, but includes

> "the way of life, the customs, the language - or if the language goes, the accent - the food, the stores, the weddings, the knowledge of how to approach a person on the street or how to address someone, and the comfortable expectation that one will oneself be approached and addressed in the same way." (Glazer 1979, 203)

While social structures such as organized religion often played important roles in permitting the expression of ethnicity (Herberg 1960), in the 1960s and 70s new structures were needed to address questions of culture. For some, those structures are found within the New Ethnicity.

Most discussions of the New Ethnicity distinguish it from the ethnicity of immigrant groups. Stein and Hill make a distinction between "the current self-conscious ideological ethnicity, and what might be called the prior unselfconscious, if not unconscious, behavioral ethnicity" (1977, 13-14). George Devereux (1975) makes a similar distinction, calling the former "ethnic identity" and the latter "ethnic personality." Alter (1979) also notes a number of distinctive features of the New Ethnicity which all

relate to oppositional processes, the placing of feeling over mind or reason, past over present, collectivity over individuality.

According to Novak, the New Ethnicity differs from the old ethnicity because it is not "tribal." As a result of what he calls "modernity," meaning the interactions and assimilations between various groups, Novak feels we cannot go back to the old ethnicity. Instead he proposes,"that we have the opportunity to adapt from one another's behaviour those elements that suit us, and at the same time to remain ourselves." He sees the New Ethnicity as "a way of being oneself, of not having to be like all the others, and of defining one's individuality" (1979, 185). This creates a new identity "that selectively incorporates cultural content from the past. The key to such use is not the past, however, but current needs." (Stein and Hill 1977, 2)

One of the potentially negative products of re-discovery of ethnicity is a focus on preserving authentic, or representational, versions of culture. According to Sennet "the language of many of the ethnic revivalists is like the language of museum curators, talk of conservation, preservation, restoration. But a living tradition is not like a painting; it needs to be changed and touched by each new generation" (1979, 199). According to Stein and Hill, it is "not the presence of tradition, but the search and scholarly research for it [that] is one of the hallmarks of the New Ethnicity" (1977, 3).

The New Ethnicity is not without its detractors. Alter (1979, 191) sees problems with ethnicity and "a language that presents the individual as a passive conduit for the collective past (the past thinks in him) and places such peculiar stress on what is nonrational (passions, instincts, sensibilities, predilections)." Glazer wonders if ethnicity is "simply fashionable or faddish or a grab for funds and other benefits," questioning whether such a focus might not bring about more social alienation and conflict (1979, 203). Stein and Hill point out that often,"Love for one's fellows is inseparable from hatred of the collective enemy" (1977, 213). However, with regard to the value of New Ethnicity, Glazer concludes "No matter how extreme or outlandish it may seem to begin with, if the

demand is raised, persisted in, finds adherents, it *is* serious, or as serious as anything becomes in this world" (1979, 209).

It is interesting to note that at the same time that Novak and his contemporaries were predicting political strength for white ethnics in the United States, white ethnic groups in Canada were exerting themselves as a political force in order to effect changes in federal government policy.

***Federal Multiculturalism Policy***

The 1960s saw the escalation of a critical situation in Quebec. The Quiet Revolution involved a shift to an urban, industrial, secular society (Juyal 1994). While the black-white issue in US was influenced heavily by the economic imbalance between these two groups, the French-English question in Canada was primarily political and cultural (Reitz and Breton 1994). Drawn to their own collective identity, the Québécois resented their exclusion from the central political institutions and symbolic order of Canadian society (Breton 1984). Additional pressure for change stemmed from the growing assertiveness of Canada's aboriginal peoples and increased resentment among ethnic minorities uneasy with their subordinate status in society.

Senator Paul Yuzyk, in a speech in the Canadian Senate on May 3, 1964, discussed the emergence of a "Third Force" made up of all those Canadians of non-English and non-French origin. Yuzyk suggested that the ethnic groups which constitute this Third Force have, because of minority status, much in common, and that as a united group they could hold the balance of power between the English and the French. (Wangenheim 1966, 72-73).[5]

To address these potential threats to Canadian unity and identity, the federal government appointed the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism in 1963 (Fleras and Elliot 1992).

*Bilingualism & Biculturalism*

The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism was convened "to inquire into and report upon the existing state of bilingualism and biculturalism in Canada and to recommend what steps should be taken to develop the Canadian Confederation on the basis of an equal partnership between the two founding races, taking into account the contribution made by the other ethnic groups to the cultural enrichment of Canada and the measures that should be taken to safeguard that contribution." (Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. 1970, xxi)

However, what the Commission had not counted on was the strong, negative reaction taken by non-charter groups (spearheaded by the Ukrainian community) to the first three Reports which focused solely on French-English relations. The Commission responded by undertaking a series of research projects on "other" ethnic groups and publishing a fourth report in 1969, entitled *The Cultural Contributions of the Other Ethnic Groups* (Frideres 1997; Kallen 1994).

The submissions by Ukrainian groups to the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism indicated that minority ethnic groups had many of the same complaints and claims as French Canadians (Wangenheim 1966, 86). Their reactions were fueled by a rise in ethnic consciousness, rejecting old assimilationist models (March 1980, 213). In the past, education policies towards Ukrainians had "contained assimilationist and enculturative techniques combined with what may be called imperialistic and hegemonic elements." (Curinsky 1978, 360) The right to instruction in languages other than English or French now became a central component of their arguments. Groups such as the Germans and Ukrainians also felt that their identities were slighted by the federal government's Official Languages Act which gave French official status nation-wide (Fleras and Elliot 1992).

An important role in shifting the focus of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism to the concerns of "other" ethnic groups was played by a Ukrainian Canadian, J.B. Rudnyc'kyj of Winnipeg, an official member of the Commission.[6]

Rudnyc'kyj raised concerns and made recommendations on behalf of non-English and non-French minorities, including Ukrainians, which eventually lead to the development of the policy of multiculturalism. He even went as far as suggesting that Ukrainian should be declared an official regional language on the Prairies.[7]

*Multiculturalism Policy*

On October 8, 1971 Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau proclaimed a policy of "multiculturalism within a bilingual framework" (House of Commons Debates, 8545-46). The policy had four broad objectives,

> 1) to assist all Canadian cultural groups so that they can develop a capacity to grow and contribute to Canadian society,
> 2) to assist members of cultural groups to overcome cultural barriers to full participation in Canadian society
> 3) to promote creative encounters and interchanges among all Canadian cultural groups, and
> 4) to assist immigrants to acquire at least one of Canada's official languages (Government of Canada 1978).

During the next year, the Government created a federal ministry responsible for multiculturalism and in 1973 the Canadian Consultative Council on Multiculturalism was formed (Ungerleider 1992).

The multiculturalism/bilingualism policy represented the government's attempt to "appease and contain the conflicting empowerment demands of both immigrant minorities through support for the maintenance of minority ethnocultures in the private sphere, and of French-Quebecers through nation-wide bilingualism" (Kallen 1994, 64-65). Outside observers felt that because of the official acceptance of multiculturalism Canadian ethnocultural groups have a more protective environment than their American counterparts (Lipsett 1990, 179).

Much of the success achieved by ethnic minorities was because political pressure by Ukrainians was applied to selected targets (Petryshyn 1984). It was widely accepted that Ukrainians were "heavy into multiculturalism" (Lupul 1984, 179), with several community

leaders throwing their support behind the concept (Marunchak 1970). Some believed the multiculturalism policy was adopted because it was the only practical and realistic policy for Canada (Tarnopolsky 1975).

Supporters of multiculturalism argue that ethnicity serves to meet an individual's expressive needs for emotional security and support. Maintenance of ties to distinctive ethnic communities and cultures provide "an important sense of group belongingness and identity necessary in order to counteract the impersonal and alienating environmental influences of a post-technological workaday world." (Kallen 1994, 64) On the other hand, opponents contend that maintenance of distinctive cultural values impedes upward mobility in a society that demands conformity in public life, and also impedes the development of national unity (Porter 1979). Mazurek states that as with the concepts of "justice," "beauty," and "love," even though people seem to approve of multiculturalism and know what it is, everyone seems to define and practice it differently (1987, 146).

*Multiculturalism as a form of Assimilation*

Multiculturalism could be seen as an extension of ideas and ideologies developed by John Murray Gibbon.[8] Gibbon viewed the non-charter groups in Canada as simply not yet blended together into one type. His intent was "to preserve for the future Canadian race the most worthwhile qualities and traditions that each racial group brought with it" (1938, 10). What Gibbon had primarily in mind were crafts, songs and music.

Multiculturalism is seen by some as a tool to preserve the hegemony of the white, English-speaking portion of society. Pizanias criticizes the Gibbons style of multiculturalism "not because it enables people to transfer foreign cultures and language, but because it asks the newcomers to forget their past, to lose their identity through the loss of their language, because it allows them to participate only marginally on ceremonial occasions for the benefit of the established groups and in ways that are both politically safe and easily appropriated - via food, dance, music, handicrafts" (1992, 92). Others have also

argued that multiculturalism serves assimilationist purposes and that the policy is a merely decorative process, a form of "disguised assimilation" which allows the government to co-opt minority communities (Abu Laban and Stasiulis 1992; Eleras and Elliot 1992; Reitz and Breton 1994).[9] While reinforcing the concept of "symbolic ethnicity" it provides the illusion of pluralism (Li and Bolaria 1983).

Multiculturalism in Canada is double edged, it promotes cultural diversity which enhances and legitimizes the quality of life for many Canadians, yet is viewed as the thing that will bring about the disunity of the nation. It is based on the conflicting principles of universalism (the belief that social attributes such as ethnicity and race are irrelevant in the activities of everyday life), and difference (which recognizes and values distinct social characteristics such as ethnicity and race) (Frideres 1997, 87).

*Effect of Multiculturalism*

Multiculturalism did have some immediate positive effects. Ethnic communities that were once considered on the periphery of society, became part of the mainstream (Gauld 1992). At the same time, some measure of respect for the internal structures of ethnic groups was achieved. William Newman writes that the most dramatic cases of minority social mobility are "facilitated through the creation of minority-group-controlled parallel structures, not through structural assimilation." (1978, 43)

While critics of multiculturalism downplay the role of music and the arts within ethnic communities, implying that they trivialize other important aspects of culture, Sommers suggests that expressive culture does not merely reflect the existing social order but also can help to create new social relationships (1991, 50). This resonates with the more general argument that connection to traditional music is not just nostalgia for 'traditional sounds', or a commitment to 'different' songs, but also provides individuals with experience of alternative modes of social interaction (Frith 1996, 124).[10]

***Student Protest***

A third factor influencing social conditions in North America (and eventually assisting the development of a youth oriented form of Ukrainian culture in Montreal) was the rise of youth activism. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, American youth were swept up in a wave of protest focusing on the Viet Nam war, Civil Rights issues, and extending to anything that represented oppression by what they called "the establishment." Youth culture, especially in the field of popular music, further developed and capitalized on the images of protest (Auslander 1989), and Ukrainian youth in North America soon became involved in similar organized demonstrations.[11]

The main body coordinating youth activism among Ukrainians in Canada was the Ukrainian Canadian Students Union [SUSK]. SUSK was founded in 1953 to unite a number of denominational and party-affiliated student organizations and independent university student clubs. In the late 1960s it developed into a vocal and dynamic body concerned with issues such as the democratization of the Ukrainian Canadian Committee, multiculturalism in Canada, and the fate of dissidents in Soviet Ukraine (Woycenko 1982). SUSK's endeavors included publications such as their official newspaper *Student*, [12] the organization of conferences (Connor 1970) and the coordination of political rallies. Part of the organization's mandate was to encourage and develop political awareness and activism among its members, [13] and to provide training and networking skills through summer fieldwork programs.[14]

The efforts of SUSK to coordinate protest demonstrations contributed greatly to increasing public awareness of issues important to the Ukrainian community. The group was instrumental in leading demonstrations at the Soviet Embassy in Ottawa.[15] A hunger strike on behalf of Ukrainian dissidents held in conjunction with the Congress of the Ukrainian Canadian Committee in October, 1971 lead to a meeting between Ukrainian Canadian student leaders and Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau.[16] Later that same

year, students were active in a demonstration protesting a visit to Canada by Soviet Premier Alexei Kosygin, which resulted in violent clashes between demonstrators and police.[17] Because of its relative geographic proximity to Ottawa, young people from Montreal could easily travel to take part in demonstrations at the nation's capital. As Bohdan Tymyc of Montreal recalled,"You're doing a *zabava* one day, and the next you're in a manifestation [demonstration] against the Bolsheviks."[18]

Music also provided a forum for voicing protest. Some cultural evenings organized by Ukrainian Canadian youth focused on the situation of composer Volodymyr Ivasiuk, a leading figure in western Ukrainian popular music, who achieved cult status after his death, which was widely believed to be an assassination by the KGB. SUSK worked actively to distribute recordings by artists they felt were persecuted in Soviet Ukraine (Krawchenko 1984, 184).[19] The organization also became active in other branches of the arts. It made an impressive presentation on multilingual programming before the House of Commons Committee on Broadcasting, Films, and Assistance to the Arts in 1974 (Woycenko 1982).

### *Ukrainian Montreal in the 1970s*

#### *Urban Sensibilities*

As an ethnic community, the Ukrainians of Montreal were forced to deal with circumstances somewhat different than their compatriots in other parts of Canada. Because of the timing of their arrival and their part in developing the agricultural system of the prairies, combined with their large numbers and settlement in homogenous blocs, Ukrainians in western Canada had developed as a visible and valued part of Canadian society. Ukrainians in urban centres of Ontario, especially Toronto, could also enjoy a strength in numbers. For the Ukrainians of Montreal the relatively small size of the community (approximately 19, 000 in 1981) and their situation within an extremely vibrant Francophone culture, forced them to develop new cultural models in order to help define themselves (Bertiaume-Zavada 1994, 176-180; Myhul and Issacs 1980, 226; Kelebay

1980). As Bohdan Tymyc, one of the most active participants in the Montreal Ukrainian music scene, describes,

> In Montreal the environment of the French culture, multi-cultural, the city itself being a port city, the fusion of everything happened. There was a very active Polish scene, a Hungarian scene, and all of a sudden, well, we're not any different, we can also do this. . . The city has a joie de vivre, people party all the time. Guys could get together and jam a lot. And people like live music . . .[20]

In the 1970s the Ukrainian cultural face of Montreal was presented to the rest of North America through the activity of its musicians. Several factors lead to the development of this unique and dynamic scene. As a result of the changing cultural climate of Quebec in the 70s, the Ukrainian community was feeling confined, and reacted by encouraging intense activity, especially among their youth, for the development and preservation of Ukrainian culture.[21] Since a majority of the Ukrainian population of Montreal arrived as part of the third wave, post-war immigration, the cultural items focused on were in line with similar developments among third wave immigrants in other parts of Canada. However, because of intimate nature of the community, this activity was intensified (Bertiaume-Zavada 1994, 184).

Ukrainians in Montreal had developed social patterns similar to that of other Ukrainian communities in North America. Community celebrations focused on the commemoration of anniversaries of historic events and figures, religious holidays, and seasonal rituals, with weddings and dances known as "zabavas" the prime situation for encountering instrumental dance music. It is the nature of this dance music that was unique.

Each wave of Ukrainian immigration to Canada transported a version of Ukrainian culture that was contemporary for the European setting they were leaving. The early waves brought with them acoustic string music, because that was the predominant musical genre at the time they left the villages of western Ukraine. The third wave immigrants left from a much different environment. Their musical culture was already considerably more cosmopolitan. Mass transportation and mass media, not to mention the actual displacement of large portions of the population as the result of war, put Ukrainians into contact with a

multitude of cultural genres. As a result, the tastes of this group upon arrival to Canada were already considerably different from that of the previous waves. When combined with further influences from the urban French culture that they were now surrounded by, it resulted in a musical hybrid that contained not only traditional polkas and waltzes, but also a partiality towards other musical genres, especially popular Latin dance rhythms like the tango, rumba and fox trot. Dance bands playing this type of hybrid music were popular among Ukrainians from their arrival in the late 1940s through the 1960s (Bertiaume-Zavada 1994, 201-202).[22]

A second factor which strongly influenced the dance bands of the 70s was the focus on the preservation of Ukrainian culture. An important aspect of this movement was stress on Ukrainian language retention. Ukrainians in Montreal set up a system of weekend school to give instruction in Ukrainian language and culture, as well as several summer camps where intensive programs could be provided (similar structures were evident among Ukrainians in other parts of Canada as well). While Ukrainians experienced some drop in the use of the Ukrainian language, it should be noted that most ethnic groups in Quebec retain their mother tongue to a greater degree than in the rest of Canada (Bourhis 1994, 327; Myhul and Issacs 1980, 227).

One strategy for encouraging the use of Ukrainian language was its promotion through the vehicle of music. As a result, the schools and camps dedicated a significant portion of their time to singing Ukrainian folk and popular songs.[23] Choirs were also an important component of the community (Bertiaume-Zavada 1994, 190). This body of songs and the choral settings they were often performed in would provide a foundation for many of the bands of the Montreal scene of the 1970s.

***Rushnychok***

The catalyst for the Montreal music scene of the 1970s was the quick rise in popularity of the band "Rushnychok" (Bertiaume-Zavada 1994, 201).

Rushnychok was a four piece band comprised of accordion, guitar, electric bass and drums. The group members, Eugene Osidacz, Andrij Harasymowycz, Yurko Sztyk and Stepan Andrusiak respectively, were childhood friends who had been involved together in Ukrainian cultural organizations. In December of 1969 they joined to form the band, with their inaugural performance occurring at a New Years Eve dance that same year. Initially, the group performed primarily in the dance scene around Montreal. They received their break when they were asked to perform at a Ukrainian event in Ottawa. After this performance, word of the group spread across North America, and they were invited to performances at Canada's National Ukrainian Festival in Dauphin, Manitoba in 1972, at the Soyouzivka Resort in Kerhonkson, New York in 1973, and to the Garden State Arts Festival in Horndel, New Jersey in 1974, where they played to an audience of over 10,000.[24] The group went on to many other festival and dance performances throughout North America, and release four long play recordings.

A combination of several factors lead to the popularity of Rushnychok. Many of these factors are extra-musical and focus on images that draw on folkloric and national symbols, heightened by an increased awareness of ethnicity.

*Name*

The name "Rushnychok" is symbolic on several levels. The *rushnyk*[25] or embroidered cloth is a highly charged ritual and national symbol for Ukrainians. The *rushnyk* was an important part of major life cycle rituals in Ukraine, a newborn baby was placed on a *rushnyk*; a *rushnyk* by important ritual officials and is also used to bind together the hands of the bride and groom during the wedding ceremony; at funerals the deceased was covered with a *rushnyk*. In the Diaspora, the *rushnyk* continued to be an important ritual, religious and even national symbol. It was widely used to decorate churches, and occupied a prominent spot in homes above icons and holy pictures (Mushynka 1993).

In another ritual function, a young man leaving home was presented a *rushnyk* by his mother or his betrothed. This scenario was the theme for a song composed by Platon Maiboroda, based on a text by Andrii Malyshko, that gained widespread popularity in Ukraine (Hordiichuk 1964, Nedil'ko 1977). It was this song that provided the name for Montreal's "Rushnychok," and its performance became one of their trademarks.

*Repertoire and Sound*

Rushnychok drew on resources from the cultural milieu that they grew up in. Since choral singing was an important part of the musical fabric of the Ukrainian community of Montreal, multi-part singing was naturally extended into the repertoire of Rushnychok. This focus on the sung text executed in multiple parts was quite unlike the music of previous dance bands. Until this time, melody and rhythm for dancing were the central elements of the music of dance bands. If material was sung, it was often by one or two singers.[26] Rushnychok capitalized on their knowledge of the choral repertoire and used this material to build their dance program.[27]

In addition to multi-part renditions of well-known folk songs, Rushnychok also incorporated material from the popular song repertoire of contemporary Ukraine. They combined lyrical pieces, like their own theme song "Rushnychok,"[28] with songs from current-day Ukrainian composers like Volodymyr Ivasiuk.[29] All were performed with electric guitar, electric bass and electric accordion accompaniment to give them a more contemporary flavour.

*Presentation*

Another way Rushnychok appealed to the urban youth market was through their physical appearance on stage. All four were young men with the longish hair-styles of the day. Their stage set-up expanded that of the D-Drifters-5 earlier. Rushnychok used more sound re-enforcement equipment and larger amplifiers, because they were more readily

available. Their stage set-up was not unlike that of pop or rock bands, with musicians standing at microphone stands across the front of the stage, and a drummer on an elevated riser at the back. Rushnychok also incorporated these images into their promotional material.

*Costumes*

Rushnychok also started new trends in stage apparel for Ukrainian bands. While the D-Drifters-5 were professionally attired in the styles of the day, Rushnychok strove to capitalize on overt Ukrainian imagery. They dressed in stylized kozak costumes, complete with embroidered shirt, sharavry (wide pants), zhupan (overcoat), poias (wide sash), and tall boots. This image immediately made a statement that the group was more Ukrainian than their predecessors, and more in tune with "authentic" Ukrainian culture (Rushnychok 1995).

Rushnychok developed variations of their "Ukrainian" stage costume, inevitably influencing all generation that followed them. While some other groups adopted the kozak costumes, [30] the black pants/embroidered shirt combination has become a ubiquitous uniform for Ukrainian dance bands.

*Ukrainian Imagery*

Rushnychok also incorporated other overtly Ukrainian imagery in their record packaging and stage presentation. As a play on their own name, the band tied embroidered *rushnyky* to their microphone stands. In this way they transformed a cultural item that carried ritual or religious significance into a new kind of icon for ethnic identity. Other photographs show the group with other signifying props. For example, the *topirets* (hand ax), itself a symbol of the Hutsul culture, is displayed, connecting the band to another sub-genre of Ukrainian music. Items such as these were not utilized simply because of their aesthetic value, but because they are "totems or insignias of difference and distinction for public display." (Stein and Hill 1977, 215-6)

***Yevshan Records***

Around the same time that Rushnychok was gaining popularity, Yevshan began operation as a small independent record company in Montreal under the direction of Bohdan Tymyc.[31]

Tymyc was also a product of the Ukrainian community of Montreal, participating in various youth organizations. He regularly attended dances and was familiar with many of the musicians in the Montreal scene. It was through his participation in the production of a contemporary Ukrainian play staged at Sir George Williams University that he came to the attention of leaders of SUSK [Ukrainian Canadian University Student's Union].

Tymyc first became involved in the music industry when he was hired by SUSK as a summer fieldworker.[32] His job was to see closure of SUSK's "Banned in the USSR" project. The project entailed the production and distribution of a recording by the Kyiv based folk-rock group Kobza, which was among the first Ukrainian groups to blend elements of traditional folk songs with contemporary rock music. The SUSK project took advantage of the fact that very little information was available about such groups from Ukraine. This being the case, SUSK called their Canadian version of this album "Banned in the USSR,"[33] playing on the stereotypical implication that this music and other musics of its type were not allowed by Soviet authorities. In fact, the original album had official approval, having been recorded and produced by the state run Melodiya record company (Krawchenko 1984, 184). Tymyc's job was to travel across Canada updating accounts with all retailers that had carried the Kobza record. This project introduced him to the retail end of the Ukrainian Canadian recording industry, and laid the groundwork for the development of his own record label.

Yevshan's first entry into the record business was with a young Montreal singer, Lubomyra Kowalchuk.[34] After hearing her singing at a youth camp, Tymyc organized a session where she would record material he had collected while traveling the country for

SUSK. He enlisted the Montreal dance band Syny Stepiv as backup musicians. The session resulted in a 45 RPM record of the song "Kazka." Unfortunately, Tymyc soon discovered that the 45 medium was no longer popular nor profitable. He had Kowalchuk record more material, some which they had recently received from Ukraine, [35] and produced an album which eventually sold close to 15, 000 copies. This gave Tymyc the financial basis to proceed further into the recording business.

Yevshan's early recordings fell into two categories. One featured the zabava style music of dance bands like Syny Stepiv, Samotsvit, Vechirnyj Dzvin and Ivan Sheremeta. The other featured more eclectic music featuring vocal soloists and trios, as well as the ensembles assembled for concept albums. In each case, the company was offering products different from those of other record producers. As a result artists from other parts of North America began emulating the Montreal style.

On the basis of his success with the Montreal groups of the early 1970s, Tymyc was able to build a successful business. With the wide popularity of the early Yevshan recordings, other groups began to approach the company with projects. The catalogue grew to include not only Montreal bands, but recordings of ensembles from across North America and from Ukraine. The kinds of music represented expanded from dance music to include choral, liturgical, bandura, folk dance, classical, contemporary and rock music. Eventually the company expanded from record production and wholesaling to a full service mail order business carrying not only recorded music but also Ukrainian books, videos, computer software, artwork, gifts and novelty items. Currently, the Yevshan catalogue offers approximately 16, 000 items is distributed to over 45, 000 homes and organizations in Canada and the U.S., with products distributed to over 85 retailers in 6 countries.

***Youth Market***

Part of Yevshan's success was based on a need for products which addressed a youth market. While most of the recordings produced in western Canada up to this point

(with the exception of some by the D-Drifters-5) were designed with the tastes of the older generations of immigrants in mind, the Montreal products of Yevshan and Rushnychok's Sage Productions were specifically designed for a younger generation.

Most of the early recordings from Montreal contained music by dance bands primarily designed for the zabava market. Dances, mainly attended by young people, were still the predominant performance venue for these bands, and many of the early Yevshan recordings featured the kind of music performed at such events. The bands themselves consisted chiefly of younger musicians. As a result, the record packages featured many photographs of young men and women, making the products more appealing to younger consumers. The costuming and imagery initiated by Rushnychok was emulated by many of the ensuing groups, often taken to a higher degree. While Rushnychok album covers featured the group dressed in full kozak garb, bands like Syny Stepiv were depicted not only in similar costumes, but brandishing sabres[36] or seated on horseback.[37]

The company soon began to branch out into other kinds of musical projects. Often the packaging of these products, which mirrored that of mainstream pop music, was as significant as the content. For example, one of Yevshan's experiments involved the production of "concept albums" where all of the musical items share a common theme and are connected to depict a story. The first in this concept series was "The Ballad of Zoryana" which, along with a well produced musical component, came packaged in an elaborately decorated folding jacket complete with accompanying booklet. [38] The front cover featured a traditional woodcut frame surrounding a nostalgic painting of a village scene.[39] The back cover featured paleography using 17th century script,"meant to reflect the concept of the album through the ages." Evidence of the fact that this product was produced with a young audience in mind is provided by the following dedication found in the accompanying booklet,

> Dedicated to all young Ukrainians who are able to use the performing and creative arts as an expression of their involvement in the preservation of Ukrainian heritage in North America

The "Ballad of Zoryana" album was not the project of a single musical group, but rather, drew on several musical resources within the Ukrainian community of Montreal. Yevshan continued this trend with further concept albums[40] and seasonal albums.[41] This exchange of musical ideas and personnel between various groups was one of the reasons for the vibrancy of the Montreal Ukrainian music scene. Since most of the musicians knew each other, having grown up together participating in Ukrainian youth and sports organizations, they often "exchanged songs, bought each other's equipment, rented vans."[42] Similar exchanges led to new groups and new recordings.

While the music produced in the Montreal scene of the 1970s was directly geared toward youth, many of the songs and symbols continued to draw on models rooted in nineteenth-century village life in Ukraine. Ethnic rebirth or renaissance of this type often involves building on or acting out new cultural or political expressions based on some "Golden Age" which is separated from the present by a period of hardship or adversity. This past evokes images of youthfulness which serve the dual function of "ethnicity mobilization combined with the evocation of personal and culture-historical youth," through which folklore becomes meaningful (Dubinskas 1983, 34). This is similar to what Gans describes as symbolic ethnicity, the "nostalgic allegiance to the culture of the immigrant generation ... a love for and pride in a tradition that can be felt without having to be incorporated in everyday behaviour" (1979, 9).

Dubinskas contrasts the role of folkloric performance for different generations within an ethnic community. He suggests that for older members of the community,"folkloric performing symbolizes their remembered youth, and re-creates its ambiance in symbolic action," while for modern teenagers,"performing and rehearsing are part of their youthful socializing, recreation and courtship. The teenaged performers are not re-creating a past ambiance so much as enjoying "folklore" as a present pleasure."

(Dubinskas 1983, 119). For the youth of Montreal, the their unique interpretations helped the traditional folkloric material they inherited from their parents evolve into a cultural form which addressed the needs of the younger generation.

***Rise of the Festivals***

The relatively close proximity to large Ukrainian populations in New York and Toronto, made it relatively easy for Montreal musicians to travel to these locations and affordable for organizers of events to hire them. As a result, Montreal bands like Rushnychok became regular performers not only at dances and private functions but also at large community events and Festivals.

The early 1970s saw the rise in popularity of several large Ukrainian festivals in western Canada (Klymasz 1976).The largest of these were Canada's National Ukrainian Festival, which began in Dauphin, Manitoba in 1966, and the Ukrainian Pysanka Festival in Vegreville, Alberta in 1974. Montreal groups were featured many times at each festival. Rushnychok first performed Dauphin in 1972 and returned in 1977. They also appeared in Vegreville in 1975, 1977 and 1980. They were followed there by Montreal compatriots Syny Stepiv in 1979 and Veselka in 1981. Appearances by these groups not only introduced western audiences to the eastern brand of music, but also helped give the festivals a more cosmopolitan appearance.

***Implications for Western Canadian Bands***

With Montreal bands traveling to the prairies, some western bands felt a need to adopt a similar style, both to compete and to maintain currency. This was especially true for the western urban centres, which saw the rise of eastern style groups. Bands such as Dumka in Edmonton, Yaseny in Saskatchewan, and Volya in Winnipeg all appeared during the 1970s (Klymasz 1982; Yevshan 1998).[43] These groups modeled themselves on the eastern aesthetic, with repertoires featuring multiple part vocals, and instrumentation that favoured brass and electronic instruments over the traditional fiddle and tsymbaly that had

been most common in the west. Their audiences were also urban Ukrainians who had an appreciation for the kind of music that had developed in the east. Even the names of these bands marked a departure from the previous western Canadian norms, reflecting a stronger influence of literary Ukrainian language and imagery. While many of the old time groups were still very active, this new crop of bands laid the groundwork for the next wave of musicians, who would be influenced by another brand of eastern Canadian music.

Plate 9: Rushnychok in Kozak style costumes, circa 1971

Plate 10: Rushnychok publicity photo, holding Hutsul style symbolic axes (topirets')

Plate 11:
Rushnychok stage
set-up (a)

Plate 12: Rushnychok stage
set-up (b)

Plate 13 removed because of copyright restriction

Plate 13: One of Yevshan's (then known as Dumy) first productions, "Syny Stepiv [Sons of the Steppes], Volume 1." Note the similarity in attire to that of Rushnychok, with the addition of sabres.

Plate 14 removed because of copyright restriction.

Plate 14: "Ballad of Zoryana," Yevshan's first concept album.

[1] George Paleniuk, recorded interview, March 1996.

[2] Myrnam and Vermillion are both towns in east central Alberta with large populations of people of Ukrainian descent.

[3] Paleniuk refers to accordionist/singer Ron Cahute, whose recordings are popular among people in this region.

[4] Paleniuk, March 1996.

[5] Note the similarities between Yuzyk's comments on the Canadian situation in the 1960s and Novak's views on the role of New Ethnicity in American politics of the early 1970s.

[6] After the tabling of the Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, Rudnyc'kyj continued to be active in the development of federal policy concerning ethnic groups in Canada. See Rudnyc'kyj 1983a, 1983b, 1984 and Ukrainian Canadian Council of Learned Socieities 1968..

[7] See *Svoboda*, The Ukrainian Weekly, Saturday April 25, 1970.

[8] Gibbon was the Canadian Pacific Railway's head of publicity, and organized a number of folk festivals, often featuring ethnic groups, at the company's hotels between 1927 and 1930 (Rosenberg 1993, 6).

[9] According to statistics, even among first generation Ukrainians there is a tendency to refer to oneself as being a "Ukrainian Canadian" or a "Canadian of Ukrainian origin" (59 percent) or even "Canadian" (26.6 percent) rather than as a "Ukrainian only" (12.3 percent) (Kuplowska 1980,157)

[10] Yinger suggests that each subsequent generation might identify with different elements of a traditional culture. While the immigrant generation might identify with the culture of a particular village or region, their descendants may undergo a shift in identity toward a "high" culture not previously their own, but that expresses national consciousness. The next generation perhaps becomes hyphenated Canadians or Americans with an ethnic flavour (1994).

[11] "Students Protest Moroz Trial" *Svoboda* Saturday, November 7, 1970.

[12] See, for example, a special issue of *Student* (4(1), January, 1970) which featured articles "Free Moroz," "Krouty" (commemorating the slaughter of 300 Ukrainian University students by Bolsheviks in the town of Krouty in 1918), "Do You Have the Time to Protest?," "Intellectual Dissent," "A Chronicle of Resistance."

[13] For example, panels focusing on "Our Future in Canadian Politics" and "The Future of Our Culture in Canada" were part of the 9th Congress of the Ukrainian University Students Union in 1968.

[14] "Community Action!" *Student* 2(12) February 1971.

[15] "Do You Have Time to Protest?" *Student* 4(1) January, 1971; "Demonstrate Soviet Embassy October 17" *Student* 4(14) October, 1971.

[16] "Solidarity with Our Brothers" *Student* 4(14), October, 1971; "The Magic Formula, Solidarity Wins Out" *Student* 4(15), November, 1971.

[17] See "Police Were Beating Everybody in Sight" *Toronto Daily Star*, November 18, 1971.

[18] Bohdan Tymyc, recorded interview, July, 1998. Tymyc refers to the fact that the same students who were organizing social events such as zabavas were also instrumental in organizing political demonstrations. He also adds that groups of Ukrainian youth from Montreal often traveled to Ottawa to take part in political demonstrations which were also often followed by social events.

[19] For further discussion of the recording "Banned in the USSR" by the pop group Kobza, see Yevshan Records below.

[20] Bohdan Tymyc, recorded interview, July 1998.

[21] Ukrainians in Quebec were part of the group refereed to 'allophones' the term used to describe individuals who have neither French nor English as a mother tongue regardless of whether such individuals are first- second- or third generation immigrants to Quebec (Bourhis 1994).

[22] J. Weselowsky, a Ukrainian composer whose original tangos were extremely popular with Ukrainians throughout North America, settled and worked in Montreal in the post-war period.

[23] See the videorecording "Rushnychok: Ukrainian Music and Friends." Landrus Productions, 1995.

[24] For a reaction to Rushnychok's initial American performances see "Rushnychok - A New Musical Happening." *Svoboda*, November 1, 1973.

[25] *Rushnyk* is the Ukrainian word for a towel or cloth, which is often decorated with embroidery. *Rushnychok* is the diminutive form of *rushnyk*.

[26] While Mickey and Bunny and the D-Drifters-5 often featured multiple part singing, this was most evident in their renditions of translated English repertoire. Their recordings of Ukrainian folksongs rely primarily in two part sing in thirds.

[27] George Paleniuk recalls recognizing many of the songs in the Rushnychok repertoire as songs that were sung in the SUMK Choir that he was a member of.

[28] See Recorded Example 15.

[29] See Recorded Example 16.

[30] See "Syny Stepiv" DUMY Productions DU 7406.

[31] Bohdan Tymyc, recorded interview, July 1998.

[32] For a description of SUSK's summer fieldwork programs see "Community Action!" *Student* 2(12), February, 1971.

[33] This recording was later re-released under the title "Band in the USSR"

[34] After making a number of Ukrainian recordings, Kowalchuk moved into mainstream English pop music. Throughout the 1980s she performed under the name "Luba," and had several hits on the Canadian pop charts.

[35] Tymyc had received recordings by western Ukrainian singer Sofia Rotaru. These were also among the first Ukrainian pop recordings produced in Ukraine, and many of the pieces eventually became standard repertoire for most Ukrainian groups. A large portion of the North American audience were introduced to this music through Kowalchuk's recorded versions.

[36] "Syny Stepiv" DUMY Productions DU 7406.

[37] "Syny Stepiw Volume 2" Yevshan Folkloric Productions YFP 1001

[38] "The Ballad of Zoryanna" Yevshan Records YFP 1008. The concept for the album is described in its accompanying booklet thus: "The tale of Zoryana is told in a series of traditional Ukrainian ballads, modern folk songs and contemporary compositions. It is an allegorical tale, in which Zoryana symbolizes Ukraine (the mother country) and Ivan, the Ukrainian people displaced by unrest. The child represents the new Ukrainian youth, born and accepted into this multicultural nation. Here, the new generation is free to express their political and cultural patriotism." See Recorded Example 17.

[39] The accompanying booklet gave descriptions of folk motifs used in the woodcut, explanations about the style of the painting and paleography, and related the significance of the company name Yevshan, based on sources from folklore.

[40] "Zoloti Vorota" Yevshan Records CV108

[41] "Sviato Rizdva" Yevshan Records DC112

[42] Bohdan Tymyc, recorded interview, July, 1998.

[43] Unlike their western predecessors, this new wave of bands adopted names based on single Ukrainian words, similar to Rushnychok, Dumka (thought), Yaseny (ash trees), Volya (freedom).

# Chapter 7. Zabava azh do rannia[1], Burya and the Contemporary Dance Phenomenon

***Charka, Importing and Repackaging***

The 1990s has seen the development of an entire genre known as "zabava" music, of which Charka is clearly a product. The genre involves the kind of music performed by bands at zabava-type dance events, consisting primarily of polkas and waltzes, usually with texts sung in Ukrainian. A majority of this repertoire is a carry-over from the Montreal scene of the 1970s. The underlying feature of this music is a driving beat that is suitable for dancing.

In designing their stage presentation, Charka has selected an entire repertoire that is geared towards dancing. They have collected this repertoire from a variety of sources. While a good portion of it is rooted in the rural prairie tradition, a significant amount has been "imported" from the music of the eastern Canadian scene, and, more recently, from contemporary Ukraine. Dances (at private events such as weddings and at events open to the general public) and "zabavas" (community dances) form the majority of the band's performance opportunities, although they occasionally appear at other kinds of events.[2] Yet even at these, they stick to the driving zabava repertoire.

A good example of the kind of music that falls into the zabava category can be found on Charka's 1995 recording "Love It or L'viv It."[3] Several times throughout the recording, the group hints at musical arrangements that are innovative new takes on well known repertoire.[4] After introducing these musical ideas, the band invariably breaks into a dance tempo. George Paleniuk explains that the recording was designed primarily a sampler of what the band is capable of in live performance. He did not feel that it would benefit the group to include overly artistic pieces that stray from the dance format. Instead, listeners to this product receive an idea of what a Charka performance at a zabava is like.

In the preparation and production of their recording, Charka paid significant attention to repackaging. Since the group does not compose original works, they must take

already existing material and arrange it to reflect the distinct nature of the band. While many dance bands are content with reproducing the sound of other artists found on earlier recordings, Charka has made an effort to produce unique arrangements for many of their pieces. They achieve this primarily through the use of distinctive instrumentation. The inclusion of tsymbaly is one feature that sets them apart from most other zabava bands, while Victor Ruduke's skill as a guitarist is another. His injection into Ukrainian music of unexpected musical ideas and timbres borrowed from mainstream popular music gives Charka a sound unlike that of other bands.

The term "zabava band" is a product of the Montreal music scene of the 1970s. There, community dances were always referred to as "zabava," perhaps a reflection of the kind of language and terminology used by the post-war immigration.[5] As bands from Montreal began making appearances in other centres, especially those with a larger portion of the population coming from the previous immigrations, the use of the term also spread.

***Packaging***

As consumers are faced with an ever increasing number of products to choose from, the packaging of those products influences their reception by an audience. This is especially true with products in the field of music. Throughout this century the way that musicians looked often played an important role in determining their popularity with audiences (Negus 1992, 64-68). This has been especially true since the introduction of the twelve-inch long play record album in the 1950s. With this medium, records began to be packaged in elaborate jackets which could contain a wide variety of information, artwork and photographs. In many emerging musical genres, this visual presentation was almost as important as the sound of the records they were packaging. Zrzavy notes that it is often "cover art that established the genre's unmistakable identity" (cited in Frith 1996).

Similar processes took place in the fields of Ukrainian music in Canada. For many bands, recordings provided their only means of exposure outside of their local areas. Along

with the record's sound, the visual images on record jackets helped create a band's identity. These packages went a long way in setting up the public's expectation of what was contained inside.

Economic or social class plays an important role in how music is packaged and perceived. Most of the rural bands from western Canada took an unselfconscious approach to their packages, appearing in whatever they would normally wear for performances. On the other hand, some bands put a lot of thought into the image they wished to project. While the musical material might have been quite similar in nature, some groups presented themselves as sophisticated and urbane[6], while others emphasized a light-hearted spirit, dressing in comically exaggerated versions of farm attire.[7] In other instances, packaging can do a great deal in setting a mood, whether it is nostalgia for the old country village[8], or the most contemporary of fashions.[9]

Packaging also extends to aural packaging. Often a traditional tune is surrounded with unorthodox harmonic or rhythmic structures or combined with other melodic material in order to make each individual band's interpretation unique. It has become a part of the friendly competition between bands to see how each could create a new aural package for similar material.

***Burya,"The best damn dance band in the country"[10]***

Perhaps the most popular of all the zabava bands is the Toronto-based Burya, led by Ron Cahute. Cahute began his musical career as a drummer in his father's dance band, eventually switching to piano accordion. Burya had its beginning as a local dance band in Toronto, performing at the usual series of weddings, anniversaries, and parties, like most other dance bands. In 1979, the group released its first album "Burya I" which met with phenomenal commercial success. As a result of this recording, the group followed the pattern set by the Montreal groups of the previous decade, performing at Festivals and dances throughout the eastern United States and Canada. They eventually made their way

into western Canada, performing at the Vegreville Pysanka Festival in 1985 and 1988, and several times at Canada's National Ukrainian Festival in Dauphin beginning in 1986.

The distinguishing feature of Burya's music was a unique blend of traditional material made popular by groups from the prairies, combined with the instrumentation and style of arrangement popular among the bands from eastern Canada. In this way, the band appealed to the older generations of audiences who were familiar with the rural style of folk song material, as well as with younger audiences who had become accustomed to a more contemporary sound. Many of the arrangements introduced elements of polka music from other cultures, which helped the band secure engagements with non-Ukrainian audiences.

Much like the D-Drifters-5 of the 1960s, a large measure of Burya's success came from the fact that most of the members of the group were full time musicians. Some of the musicians that Cahute utilized both at recording sessions and in live performances were studio musicians from Toronto's mainstream music scene. Consequently, their performances had a slickness that was sometimes lacking in the performances of other part time bands.

In addition, Cahute himself possesses a distinctive, full-bodied baritone voice. It is quite unlike the kind of vocal production that was most often encountered in western Canadian recordings.[11] As a result, several conflicting yet somehow harmonious elements came together to create a new and unique sound.

While primarily a dance band, Burya quickly made a name for itself on the Ukrainian Festival circuit. Part of this was due to the band's connections to other types of stage performance. Apart from his activity in the field of music, [12] Cahute was at one time a partner in a Ukrainian restaurant and cabaret in Toronto. The restaurant featured nightly shows based on Ukrainian dance, music and comedy routines, packaged primarily for non-Ukrainian audiences. When the restaurant closed, the performers continued on with a touring production of the stage show. Acting as accompanist for dancers and actors gave

Cahute an introduction to the festival circuit. Often his band performed for zabavas following festival stage shows.

To date, Ron Cahute has recorded nine albums under the Burya name, with many more under his own. According to Cahute, the Burya recordings follow a particular format, each geared toward music for dancing. When he wanted to record some material that fell outside of the dance format, he was told by friends and advisors that audiences would not accept it as Burya. Instead he decided to release this material as "Ron Cahute - Ukrainian Generic"[13] to signal a change in content, and to avoid upsetting Burya fans who had a pre-conceived idea of what to expect on the band's recordings. By developing recordings outside of the prescribed Burya format, Cahute opened up a wide new range of possibilities for himself. His recordings now extend from the zabava music of his Burya projects to albums of instrumental melodies from Ukraine, [14] comedy records, [15] music for folk dance groups, [16] and music for children.[17] He has also provided arrangements and instrumental backing for other soloists[18] and singing groups.[19]

### *Western Roots*

*Eastward migration of Prairie Ukrainians*

The 1930s saw devastating droughts across the prairie provinces. Many farmers lost all they had as a result of the depression. In order to continue to provide for their families, many left the farms in search of other employment. This search brought a significant number of Ukrainians to the mining communities of northern Ontario, beginning a great migration of Ukrainians away from the farms and into urban and industrial centres (Swyripa 1991). In 1941, 54.6 per cent, or more than half of the Ukrainian male labour force was still involved in agriculture. By 1951, the percentage had decreased to 35.3, by 1961 it was 23.0, and by 1971, 13.2 (Isajiw 1982a, 76)

The Ukrainians that re-located to Ontario shared many similar experiences, from their original settlement and establishment of farms on the Prairies, to their new encounters in mining and industrial centres. The traditional music that had been popular in the rural

prairie communities continued to be their music of choice, often provided by musicians who had also relocated. Among these musicians was Ron Cahute's father, Maurice Cahute of Stuartburn, Manitoba.

*Transplanted western dance bands*

The kind of music re-created by Ukrainians in Ontario closely mirrored that of Ukrainians on the Prairies. The repertoire consisted primarily of polkas and waltzes along with some of the other popular specialty dances, heel and toe polka[20], sidemka (seven step)[21], butterfly[22]. Maurice Cahute had played this style of music in Manitoba, and soon established his own band in Ontario. He eventually settled in Toronto where he continued to perform regularly with his band for several years.

*Recordings re-create community*

If music is a tool for creating a sense of community, then a way to re-create that community feeling when estranged from it is to transport examples of music. While some Ukrainian communities in Ontario were fortunate enough to have musicians who were capable of performing the kind of music they had become accustomed to, this was not always possible. In some instances, the number of Ukrainians in a given community was not large enough to sustain musicians, or might not contain any musicians at all. One of the ways that these groups could recreate the community feeling through music was with the use of sound recordings.

There are several examples of how sound recordings can aid in connecting communities separated by geography. The early recordings produced by Pavlo Humeniuk and related groups out of New York in the 1920s and 30s did much to unite the immigrants on the prairies around that time. These kinds of recordings, which often recreated community events, also would have been available to Ukrainians in Ontario. In the late 1950s and early 1960s new recordings emerged from western Canada, many recreating the spirit and sounds of traditional community celebrations as they occurred on the Prairies (Klymasz 1980, 91-104; 1984, 55). For their listeners, they offered not only a connection

to the distant traditions of the villages in Ukraine, but also a connection to the more immediate past in the rural communities of western Canada.

### *Eastern Branches*

#### *Eastern dance bands*

While Maurice Cahute's dance band was clearly an extension of the tradition he transported from western Canada, it was soon necessary for him to alter his approach slightly to appeal to the tastes of urban audiences in Toronto. In the post war era, the Ukrainian community of Toronto experienced much the same dynamic as Montreal, a large influx of educated immigrants, many from urban centres in Ukraine. These immigrants also brought along their cosmopolitan music tastes. Added to this mix in Toronto were many similar immigrants in other ethnic communities. They also brought with them musical material which influenced the overall dance scene.

The music of other eastern European dance bands had a profound influence on that of Ron Cahute. From the 1930s onward, a rapidly growing genre of polka music had been developing in the eastern and midwestern United States (Greene 1992; Keil 1992). While based largely on ethnic music of the Polish, Slovenian, Czech and Scandinavian communities, it soon evolved into a unique form of its own. The music acquired regional differences based on the area of development and the concentration of residents of a particular ethnic group, with variants centred around Minnesota, Chicago, Milwaukee, Cleveland and Buffalo. This polka music eventually began to influence mainstream popular music in North America, and several songs from the repertoire of polka bands became top hits on the popular music charts in the 1940s (Greene 1992, 207).

Toronto's relatively close proximity to the U.S. "polka belt," together with the rapid growth of its own European immigrant populations, caused this new style of music to become extremely popular within the area. Dance bands performing in Toronto during the 1940s and 50s would be expected to have some measure of this kind of music in their repertoires.

*Polish sound*

One of the models that Ron Cahute used to develop his unique sound was the Polish "drive/push" music that was popular in Chicago and Buffalo. Most of the early Ukrainian recordings focused on instrumental versions of dance tunes, and those that featured vocals placed less emphasis on the instrumental accompaniment. The Polish recordings that Cahute enjoyed featured not only a focus on sung vocals, but a driving instrumental interlude between each verse. The instrumental breaks usually had a heavy emphasis on trumpets and saxophones. It was Cahute's idea to adapt this style to the Ukrainian songs he had learned from his father.[23]

In order to retain a Ukrainian flavour to his music, Cahute continued to employ the violin on all of his recordings. In this way he could fluctuate between the kind of instrumentation that had become predominant in western Canada (violin, accordion, guitar, bass and drums) and the kind of orchestras popular in the east (accordion, one or two saxophones, clarinet, guitar, bass and drums)

Cahute also says that he purposely plays his polkas slower than most Ukrainian bands. Slower tempos were also a feature of the Chicago "honky" style of polka music, which replaced the older horizontal polka step with a new, more vertical "hop-step" (March 1995).

*Questions of class (Aesthetic and economic)*

One of the problems that arose with the kind of music emanating from western Canada in the 1960s was an issue of class. Since most of the Ukrainians on the prairies were descendants of peasant stock, and most had been involved in agriculture, their music was infused with a rural flavour. Added to this was a more recent fascination with North American country music, and the attempts of some groups to blend the two.

Contrasting with this rural music was the cosmopolitan "continental" sound that was favoured by the urban Ukrainians of the East[24]. The recordings produced by groups in this genre more often featured texts sung in literary Ukrainian as opposed to the western

Ukrainian dialects spiced with macaronic phrases coming from the Prairies. The instrumentation also moved away from what was considered a rougher village sound focused on fiddles and tsymbaly, toward more "refined" arrangements based on urban European tastes.

Ron Cahute and Burya succeeded in taking musical material that was considered lower class and unacceptable by the elite levels of Ukrainian Canadian society and, through repackaging, making it acceptable. Because of the slick presentation of the band and the smooth sound of Cahute's voice it was often possible to overlook the rough quality of the songs (especially the texts) being performed. Although the members of Burya were sincere in their appreciation of this music, to the uninitiated their performances could have been parodying the macaronic tunes of the western farmers. For many other audiences, this was their first introduction to western Canadian music. Since it was presented in the eastern sound package, and its beat was extremely danceable, it was readily accepted.

***Recordings Stretch the Community***

Just as the recordings from western Canada had succeeded in extending that community atmosphere to the exiled prairie farmers in Toronto, the recordings of Burya helped create a new community. Much in the same way as he was able to break down barriers between musical genres, Cahute has been able to make connections between previously unconnected branches of the Ukrainian community. His music is popular not only in eastern Canada, but also throughout the eastern United States, the US midwest, western Canada and elsewhere as a result of his sound recordings.

Cahute's influence has extended past the boundaries of North America. On a recent trip to Ukraine, I purchased a bootleg tape containing Cahute's music from a sidewalk vendor on the streets of L'viv. Later that same trip I was present at a wedding where the musicians attempted to play one of Cahute's signature pieces,"Viter Viie," in the Burya style. This piece, composed by Fred Chetyrbok of Grandview, Manitoba, [25] contains

several macaronic phrases. The group from Ukraine, unable to decipher the text, simply continued repeating those verses which were completely in Ukrainian, along with the Ukrainian language refrain.

Figure 1,"Viter Viie" as sung by Freddie Chetyrbok and Ron Cahute

| | |
|---|---|
| Їзджу, ходжу І блукаю | I ride, I walk, I wander, |
| Model B Ford гару маю, | I have a Model B Ford car |
| Вітер віє, замітає дорожку. | The wind blows and sweeps the road |
| | |
| Запряжу я Фордяга | I harness up my Ford car |
| Куди люди туда я, | Where there are people, that's where I go |
| Вітер віє, замітає дорожку. | The wind blows and sweeps the road. |
| | |
| Вітер віє, віє, віє, | The wind blows, blows, blows, |
| Замітає, -тає, -тає, | It sweeps, sweeps, sweeps. |
| Вітер віє, замітає дорожку. X2 | The wind blows and sweeps the road.X2 |
| | |
| Приїхали до Йорктону, | We came to Yorkton. |
| Пили водку, мали "fun" -у, | Drank vodka and had fun, |
| Вітер віє, замітає дорожку. | The wind blows and sweeps the road. |
| | |
| Та прийшов до Sam's Hotel, | I came to Sam's Hotel |
| А Sam каже "Go to hell!" | And Sam says "Go to hell!" |
| Вітер віє, замітає дорожку. | The wind blows and sweeps the road. |
| | |
| Вітер віє . . . | The wind blows . . . |
| | |
| Довго там не заваджався, | I didn't hang around there long |
| Додому я заберався, | I took off for home, |
| Вітер віє, замітає дорожку. | The wind blows and sweeps the road. |
| | |
| Тай поїхав я на Пен' | I drove to Pen' |
| Там сидів я ніч І ден' | And I sat there night and day |
| Вітер віє, замітає дорожку. | The wind blows and sweeps the road. |
| | |
| Вітер віє . . . | The wind blows . . . |
| | |
| Фордянятко закурило | The Old Ford overheated, |
| А за тім сі сказило | And after that it broke down |
| Вітер віє, замітає дорожку. | The wind blows and sweeps the road. |
| | |
| Вітер віє, завірюха | The wind blew up a storm |
| Залетіла в гару муха | A fly few into the car |
| Вітер віє, замітає дорожку. | The wind blows and sweeps the road. |
| | |
| Вітер віє . . . | The wind blows . . . |
| | |
| Виїхав я з Давфин в таxі | I left Dauphin in a taxi |
| Тай купив я Ford Galaxie | Then I bought a Ford "Galaxie" |
| Вітер віє, замітає дорожку. | The wind blows and sweeps the road. |
| | |
| All the girls from Sulphur Creek | All the girls from Sulphur Creek |
| Come to see me twice a week | Come to see me twice a week |
| Вітер віє, замітає дорожку. | The wind blows and sweeps the road. |
| | |
| Вітер віє . . . | The wind blows . . . |

***Rise of the Zabava Event***

In recent years, the use of the term "zabava" to describe a community dance, has become more widespread across Canada. Previous to this, particularly in western Canada, dances were referred to in regard of their function (for example *Malanka*, the New Year's dance or *pushchennia*, the pre-Lenten dance) or simply as *danets* [dance].[26] According to Cahute, even in Toronto, with its large post-war population, the word "zabava" did not become popular until the 1970s. It is after the rise in popularity of the Montreal musicians (where the term zabava had always been popular[27]) that the term became more widespread. With Cahute's increased exposure, and his performances at eastern festivals and zabavas, the term began to gain greater wider acceptance in Toronto.

***Storm Sweeps the West***

As Cahute's band began performing in western Canada, the term zabava also began to be used more frequently in this region. Often, because of the term, the kinds of audiences that would attend a "zabava" were different from the kinds of crowd that would attend other types of dances. With the rise in demand for zabava type music, there grew a demand for Burya style zabava bands. As a result, the eastern groups began to spawn imitators in the west. The 70s and early 80s saw the development of bands such as "Dumka" and "Estrada" in Edmonton,"Volya" in Winnipeg, and "Mria" in Saskatoon, with the mid 80s seeing the rise of groups such as Alberta's "Trembita" and "Trubka"[28]. In all of these groups, we see the interesting phenomenon of bands from the west imitating those from the east, who, in turn, had been imitating earlier bands from the west.

***A New Canon***

The rise of the new generation of zabava band also saw the development of a new musical canon based on Burya repertoire. As groups strove to imitate the Burya sound, they also performed tunes that were included on the Burya recordings. Many of the most popular of these were originally found on recordings by western Canadian artists. Indeed, it is from these recordings that Ron Cahute learned them. Songs such as "Viter Viie," "Sam

Piu, Sam Huliaiu," "Kalabaiu," (all previously recorded by Freddie Chetyrbok), and "Homebrew" and "Oi Handzia Liuba" (recorded by Mickey and Bunny and the D-Drifters-5) have become standard part of the repertoires of almost every zabava band in western Canada.[29] In many cases they have been identified as Ron Cahute's pieces, largely due to his well known arrangements, even though they were not originally his compositions.

Ron Cahute, through his innovative blend of western Canadian tunes and eastern urban arrangements, was able to bridge gaps not only between musical genres, but between sections of the community. His music is enjoyed and emulated by listeners and musicians from rural and urban areas alike. Even those who do not like his brand of music must admire the effect he has had on Ukrainian music.[30] Through his efforts the groundwork was laid for Ukrainian music of the 1990s.

Plate 15: Burya Logo, circa 1979. Used by permission.

Plate 16: Burya, circa 1985. Ron Cahute, first from right. Used by permission.

[1] This phrase means "Party until morning" and is part of the chorus of a popular dance melody performed by most "zabava" type bands, including Burya.

[2] Charka has performed at fund-raising events for political candidates as well as in concert sets at Canada's National Ukrainian Festival in Dauphin, Manitoba (1995, 1998), the Vegreville Pysanka Festival (1996), and Edmonton's Hopak in the Park (1996, 1998).

[3] This title is an attempt at a play on words, combining the phrase "Love it or leave it," with the name of the western Ukrainian city "L'viv."

[4] For example, the group's introductions to folk songs "Oi ty nichen'ko" and "Oi chyi to kin' stoit'."

[5] Bohdan Tymyc, recorded interview, July, 1998.

[6] See Mickey and Bunny "Ukrainian Country Music" V Records VLP 3001, and Mickey and Bunny "Ukrainian Concert at Massey Hall" V Records, VLP 3026; "Mickey and Bunny Picture Album and Song Book," n.p., Winnipeg, 1965[?]; and Interlake Polka Kings "Souvenir Program," Winnipeg, 1966.

[7] See Royal Polka Kings "Good Old Time Ukrainian Music is Here to Stay" V Records SVLP 3089; Roy Mykytyshyn "Marriage and Married Life Ukrainian Style," V Records VLP 3090.

[8] D-Drifters-5 "Sing and Play Original and Traditional Favourites" V Records, VLP.

[9] "D-Drifters-5 Sing and Play Beatles Songs and Other Top English Hits in Ukrainian" V Records VLP 3025; D-Drifters "Polka and Fun" V Records VLP.

[10] This is quote from Toronto broadcaster Ted Woloshyn included in the liner notes to ,Burya, Set in Stone"

[11] See Chapter Four.

[12] Among other things, Cahute was a lecturer in the Department of Music at York University.

[13] Ron Cahute "Ukrainian generic Volume I" Yevshan Records CZ330, and "Ukrainian Generic Volume II" Yevshan Records CZ331.

[14] Yevshan item C1805

[15] Ihor Baczynskyj ". . .I tut bude horod . . . and the Garden Goes Here!" Yevshan DS912.

[16] Tyrsa "Ukrainian Folk Dance Repertoire"; Chaika, "Ukrainian Folk Dances"; Tryzub Dance Ensemble "Reflections of the Soul"; Vatra "Ukrainian Folk Dance"; and "Instrumental Folk Dance Selections from the repertoire of dance groups performing at Canada's National Ukrainian Festival, Dauphin".

[17] "Barabolya . . . That means Potato!" Melodica MEPCD101.

[18] Alex Holub "A Tribute to Alex Holub" Yevshan DM401.

[19] "Iasmyn/Yasmyn," RTC Records 110; Cheremshyna "Cheremshyna Volume 2" Yevshan Records YFP 1044; Voloshky "Voloshky" Yevshan DF476.

[20] Nahachewsky (1985,150) describes the Sidemka as follows, "The dancers joined in couples in polka position. The man stepped to the right with his right foot, then stepped to close with his left, and continued ... to take seven steps traveling sideways to the right. During the next four measures this sequence was repeated to the left." During the second phrase the movement "resembled the polka step, and the dancers turned clockwise as they danced."

[21] Nahachewsky (1985, 159-160) describes the Heel and Toe Polka as a dance that contained two short figures. In the first pairs of dancers stood side by side with hands joined, and traveled counterclockwise around the dancing area. In the second figure the dancers hopped on one foot while tapping the heel, then toe of the other on the ground. This was followed by a short polka step, then a repeat of the heel and toe action with the opposite foot.

[22] The butterfly is a trio dance, performed by one man between two women, or one woman between two men, which Nahachewsky describes as similar to the dance "Verkhovyna" (1985, 115). It consists of two sections. The first, in triple meter, has the trios moving to a hopping traveling step. The second section, in duple meter, had the dancers moving away from their partners. "The center dancer turned toward his or her partner to the right. Joining right arms, they danced a small circle around each other. After three quarters of a turn (sometimes one-and-three-quarters or more turns), the center dancers let go of this partner and reached his/her left hand out to grasp the left arm of the third dancer. The center dancer continued in this fashion, moving in a figure eight..."

[23] See Recorded Example 19.

[24] As used by most of the musicians who were consulted in this study, the terms "West" and "East" when referring to musical styles find their dividing line at the Manitoba-Ontario border. Music from the Prairie

provinces is considered "western" in style, while anything originating from Ontario or Quebec is considered "Eastern". Since there is little Ukrainian population east of Quebec, the Atlantic provinces do not factor in this definition of east.

[25] Freddie Chetyrbok with Johnny and the Nite-Liters "'A Pub With No Beer' and other Ukrainian Comedy Songs" Eagle Records ER 1002. See Recorded Example 18.

[26] Nick Mischi, recorded interview, May 1992.

[27] Bohdan Tymyc, recorded interview, July 1998.

[28] This wave of bands continued the trend begun in the 1970s, and also adopted names based on single Ukrainian words, similar to Burya, "Estrada" (Soviet Ukrainian word for pop music), "Mria" (Dream), "Trembita" (Ukrainian shepherd's alphorn), "Trubka" (trumpet or horn).

[29] For example, recorded versions of "Viter Viie" can also be found on Prairie Pride "Prairie Pride/Stepova Radist' Volume 2" Pinnacle Traditional P-1002; and Trubka "Pochatky/Beginnings" TMCD 141. See Recorded Examples 20 and 21.

[30] According to Cahute there is one particular musical group, which he chooses to leave unnamed, who, on one hand criticize him and his music, yet, on the other, have produced their own recording which reproduces a version of one of his arrangements, almost note for note.

# Chapter 8. Peace in the Family, Ukrainian Rural Roots

## *Charka, Part of the Ukrainian "Family"*

One common feature among many of the early Ukrainian bands in western Canada was the role of the family. Especially for immigrant individuals, family and household provide important support (Buchignani and Letkemann 1994). As subsequent generations became better established in Canada, they continued to draw on the family for support. Many of these musical groups were comprised of a father and his sons, or a group of brothers (Sadownyk 1980; Motyka 1982).In some cases, three or more generations of the same family became musicians (Wostok 1980; Yakoweshen 1980). Of course, many of the bands also consisted of two or three family members combined with other non-related musicians (Metro Radomsky 1980, 1981).

Families form the core of ensembles in other genres of music as well (Dawidoff 1997, 224-225). Rosenberg underlines the importance of family in bluegrass music, to the degree that an entire singing style became known as the "brother duet" (1985, 21). Cantwell also emphasizes the importance of family in bluegrass saying

> the persistence of blood ties in bluegrass illustrates its continuity with rural life, with long standing rural traditions . . . If the bluegrass band is not actually a family, it is one symbolically. It is patriarchal and masculine, a band of father and sons acting in defense of, on behalf of, and even sometimes in spite of the home, where, of course, the woman resides" (1984, 163-64).

While not actually related members of a family, Charka has become this kind of symbolic family. Each member plays a unique role in the band, as do individual members in a family. The group perceives itself as a cohesive team, with individual quirks tolerated for the good of the whole.[1]

Performances by family-based groups either at home, at house parties, or community events were a major form of entertainment among Ukrainians.[2] Often performances of instrumental music were accompanied by communal singing. One of Charka's goals is to recreate the community atmosphere that used to exist when families

would get together to sing. Community and family singing sessions were an important part of musical upbringing for each member of the band. Both George Paleniuk and Barry Sliwkanich recall that singing was a primary form of entertainment for their parents' generation. The group is constantly trying to find ways to combine the folk songs that were popular pieces for singing with the driving beat that is demanded by contemporary audiences for dancing.

> That's the direction we've gone. A lot of the stuff that had been meat and potatoes for a lot of people, we know it but we don't want to be playing a lot of it. We tend to try to dig up words, maybe its a bit too extreme. The "Brodska Polka," you know, (sings) da-da-da-da-da, Wade's dad's got words for that. Its also known as "Blacksmith Polka." Cause I had some charts from Radomsky, he played it as "Blacksmith." And Wade's dad, the words he has for it, they're not comedy words, its proper Ukrainian. But around Two Hills it used to be sung all the time. So on our next album, there's a chance we're gonna put that on there, you know, set it more a little more to dance.[3]

Charka made a further effort to recreate community singing by including an item of this nature on the compact disc version of their recording "Love It or L'viv It." A common practice on mainstream recordings is to feature "hidden tracks" on a compact disc. Hidden tracks are selections which do not have an indicator number, and do not appear on the printed notes accompanying the recording. Listeners access these tracks by allowing the disc to continue to play even after the entire program is completed or by scrolling backwards through selections. Charka included the popular Ukrainian folk song "Oi chorna, ia sy chorna" as a hidden track on their recording. For this piece they gathered a large group of friends and family to sing along with the band in the studio. The group hoped that this would represent the sound of a crowd singing at a party, and perhaps encourage listeners of their album to do the same.

Another way that Charka constitutes a symbolic family is through its connection to the Ukrainian community. Members of the group belong to various church, community and dance organizations, where there is often an intimate family atmosphere. Charka uses their

individual positions as integral members of the Ukrainian community, and the close contacts they have established as a result, to establish and promote themselves as a band.

***Music and Business***

For some individuals involved in Ukrainian music such as the D-Drifters, Bohdan Tymyc of Yevshan Records or Ron Cahute of Burya, music is a full time occupation. But for the overwhelming majority of Ukrainian bands in Canada music is a secondary activity. Even so, many of these musicians must apply business practices and professional standards to the operation of their bands. This is due, in part, to increased pressures from the mainstream culture. With a huge range of entertainment options available, the expectations of audiences have risen considerably, forcing even part-time bands to strive to meet these standards. Another factor influencing a rise in standards are the financial rewards that are available to bands providing services for family and community events.

Apart from the initial investment of time and money required to purchase and learn to play a musical instrument, a band has several other major expenses it must incur before it is able to perform in public. A sizable portion of capital must be allotted for the purchase of equipment. While sound reinforcement gear such as speakers, amplifiers, mixers, and microphones can be rented, most part time bands invest in their own equipment.[4] Often the type of instrument necessary for public performance differs in quality from those used by students or hobbyists and usually requires modifications to allow for sound reinforcement. Equipment must be transported to and from engagements, which affects the types of vehicles band members will purchase. Some groups must pay for the design and manufacture of special costumes, with most groups at least purchasing some kind of uniform attire. Bands also promote themselves through the use of business cards, brochures, letters, signs[5] and web-sites[6] along with the expenses incurred for travel to personal meetings and telephone calls that go along with the running of any business.

Often, the business of music outweighs the artistic aspects. During performances, on the one hand,"musicians learn to read and manipulate audiences, to please them with tricks and devices that they, the musicians, despise; on the other hand, the musicians experience rejection by audiences, often of the things with which they are most pleased" (Frith 1996, 53). In many cases, the musicians must know when to play a certain song in order to guarantee that the audience has a good time. According to Hodes,"Musicianship plays only a 50 percent role - the rest is knowing how to control the people" (as quoted in Frith 1996).

Many musicians go so far as to say that presentation is far more important than the music itself in determining a band's success at a dance. The choices that the band makes - "what music to play, at what tempo to play it, when during a performance to use certain types of music, how to respond to direct requests from the audience, to what extent verbal interaction with the audience is appropriate - can be the most significant determinant of the character and ultimate success of the social/ musical event." (MacLeod 1993, 87).

Sometimes the musicians are not in complete control of the music at an event. Occasionally the hosts will give specific instructions as to the kind of music they want played and they way in which they want it presented. The musicians must balance the expectations of their clients with what they perceive to be the demands of the dancing audience (MacLeod 1993, 92-93). Several musicians referred to themselves as "musical prostitutes," selling their services to a client for money (Frith 1996, 53-54).[7]

Another product that musicians have to sell is their ethnic identity. Charka capitalized on this factor early in their career. By actively promoting their repertoire as an authentic reflection of Ukrainian culture; by focusing attention on the tsymbaly as a Ukrainian instrument; by dressing in Ukrainian embroidered shirts for performances; and by selecting a Ukrainian name for the group they were designing their image to appeal to a particular market. Collins notes how similar techniques are undertaken by members of

aboriginal groups when dealing with non-aboriginal tourists. As one individual stated,"I'm selling a product, my Indianness" (1975, 67).

***Music and Leisure***

There is an inseparable link between music and leisure. In some instances, this is a source of tension between musicians and their audiences. As Frith states,

> This is, in one sense, a sociological response, what is work for the musician is play for the audience; the very rhythm of their lives is different, in terms of day and night, let alone status and attention. (1996, 53)

For some musicians, musical performance, and especially family-based music making, remains an important leisure activity. Leitner and Leitner report that "leisure behavior is the most important or one of the most important determinants of life satisfaction and psychological well being" (1996, 26). The reduction of stress, emotional satisfaction, enjoyable social contacts, and feelings of achievement provided by this type of leisure activity correspond closely to life satisfaction and directly relate to community well-being (Kraus 1997).

Leisure practices themselves can become important locators of social identity (Wynne 1998, 147). It is often through their activity as part time musicians that members of Ukrainian bands create a place for themselves within the Ukrainian community. Many leisure activities occur in group settings that produce opportunities for connecting with others and social interaction (Edginton, et al. 1998, 113).

Various activities in which an individual can become involved include both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Witt and Ellis 1985, 112). While initially motivated to perform music for its intrinsic value (Edginton 1998, 34), performance before an audience gives members of musical groups other motivations, among them personal recognition and financial reward. The extrinsic motivation provided by financial reward constitutes what Neulinger (1981) would call a "leisure-job," while Juniu (1993) discovered that further

advanced professional musicians were more often extrinsically motivated than amateur musicians. Stebbins suggests that there are often only qualitative differences between the activities of amateurs and professionals (1992, 38).

On the other hand, Edginton et al. (1998, 134) point out that "technology has created a number of other forms of mass leisure and changed how we participate in certain activities, such as listening to [or performing] music." Audiences expect a level of professionalism that can lead to the exclusion of musical groups whose primary motivation is leisure. An overemphasis on professionalism is something that can stifle play for both performers and audience (Lord, et al. 1985). By focusing solely on the music, rather than on external pressures, performers can experience a loss of self-consciousness (Csikszentmihalyi 1990), becoming consumed in the performance experience and the level of satisfaction and enjoyment it provides. Audiences also can enjoy the performance for factors other than its technical standards, such as for the effect it creates.

***The Polka Ramblers, A Family Band***

The Polka Ramblers are an example of a most organic form of music making, a public extension of music in the home. The band is made up primarily of members of the Kupka family of Bittern Lake, Alberta. The musical leader of the group is accordionist Sylvia Kupka who is joined by her children Randy on tsymbaly and electric bass, Gary on drums, and Shelley on saxophone and violin, along with Sylvia's husband, George, who acts as the band's manager. The band also has also included guitarists and other musicians who were not family members.[8]

Sylvia Kupka grew up in the Lavoy/Two Hills area of Alberta, where there is a large Ukrainian population. Her father played the violin and several other members of her family also played musical instruments. At an early age she began playing the accordion, and at age eleven joined a local band called the Meadowlarks, performing at many Ukrainian weddings and dances.[9]

After her marriage, Sylvia performed with the Meadowlarks for one more year, leaving public performance to devote more time to her family and farm at Bittern Lake. She continued to play the accordion for her own enjoyment. According to Kupka "There was music in house all the time, I played all the time."

When her children were in their pre-teens, Sylvia's father purchased a tsymbaly. On one visit to the Kupka farm he brought the instrument over to show the children and within minutes, Sylvia's son Randy was picking out a melody. Pleased that the boy showed an aptitude, the man gave him the instrument. Randy quickly learned several tunes with his mother's help. Encouraged by his brother's progress, Gary attempted to join in, drumming on pots from the Kupka kitchen. George then purchased an inexpensive drum set, and the boys began to practice regularly with their mother. Within three months of beginning to play, the trio was hired to perform for a fortieth anniversary dance at the local community hall for an audience of 150 people.[10]

Soon after the group began performing in public, Sylvia's daughter, Shelly, also became interested in music. She too showed a natural aptitude for music, playing any of the instruments the family had around the house. When it was suggested she try to learn an instrument that could be an addition to the band, Shelly decided on the saxophone. Like her mother and brothers, she is self-taught. At the suggestion of her grandfather she later also learned to play the violin.

The band quickly got many bookings through word of mouth. Their early performances were at standard weddings and dances. Later, they performed for larger audiences at the Vegreville Pysanka Festival in 1987 and 1988, and at the Ukrainian Pavilion of the Heritage Festival in Edmonton in 1997. They also released three long play recordings,"Ukrainian Style" in 1986,"Good Times" in 1989, and "Zabava 100" in 1991.[11]

***Motivations For Performing***

After their initial successes playing instruments Gary and Randy Kupka were highly motivated to continue learning. Encouraged by the excitement of creating music together, they asked their mother to practice with them regularly. As Sylvia Kupka recalls,

> When they came from school they'd insist I practice with them. I knew when I was young how I wanted to play, and I thought, if they want to play I'll sit down and play with them, for one hour every day after school. I always did.

Once the group began performing in public in 1977, they began experiencing other successes in front of an audience, which provided further motivation.

Performing with the band lead to a feeling of solidarity within the family. Performance at dances gave the family an activity they could take part in together, offering a release from the demands of farm work.[12] Even George Kupka, who does not play in the band, attends each performance. His presence is often as important as that of the musicians, as he meets with audience members and is instrumental in securing future engagements.

Performance events are also a social activity. After many years of performing, the group has developed a base of fans who often attend their performances. Meeting with old friends, and socializing between sets adds to the enjoyment level of playing with the band.

***Rural Connections***

The members of the Kupka family are a part of a number of social systems. On the one hand, they are members of a rural community. Here they fulfill specific roles, where they are recognized as farmers, business people and community members. On the other hand, they are also part of a similarly closely knit musical community whose members also fulfill specific functions. Many of the Ukrainian musicians in Alberta know each other, listen to each other's recordings, and attend each other's performances. It is often on the recommendation of musicians who are unable to attend an event that other bands secure engagements. Occasionally, the two systems the Kupka family are a part of interconnect

and reinforce each other. Contacts made through agricultural business may lead to future musical engagements, and connections made while at a performance can lead to benefits for the farm business.

***Fan Base***

The audiences that most enjoy the brand of music the Polka Ramblers perform are split between those from rural and urban locations.

Rural audiences are part of a unique social system. For those around the Kupka farm, the connecting thread may be mutual involvement in agriculture, the local political and social scene, or perhaps a taste for country music. In other rural areas, where there is a larger Ukrainian population, involvement in Ukrainian culture at a various levels may provide additional connections.

Sylvia Kupka notes that although the Polka Ramblers are a rural based group, a larger percentage of their performances take place in the Edmonton area. For their urban audiences, the band's activity frequently helps to fill a cultural void. Many of the Ukrainians living in prairie cities are former farmers, or the offspring of farmers, often looking for some manner of continuity with their previous rural lifestyles (Wolowyna 1980). Ukrainian music, and the contexts in which it is performed, help to preserve that continuity, forming what Nettl calls "marginal survivals" (1978, 9). The image that the Polka Ramblers project - two generations of a tight-knit farm family, working together to develop and present traditional Ukrainian culture in the old-time way, provides for audiences a salient example of that continuity.

***Ukrainian Identity***

Even though the Polka Ramblers play a variety of musical styles when performing at dances, Ukrainian music remains one of the main points identifying the group. Ukrainian community events form a specific defined market for musicians, and the band's ability to play this music provides them access to that market. It is also the music for which they

have the greatest affinity. As Sylvia Kupka states "We specialize in Ukrainian. We enjoy our Ukrainian, and we're not [even living] in a Ukrainian community."[13]

For the Kupka family, their concept of what constitutes Ukrainian music is based on strong local and family traditions. Sylvia's musical experiences as a young woman, performing music with family members and with musicians from their local district, were passed down to her children through informal, and then later more structured music making sessions in their home. However, even musicians such as these, who are informed by strong local traditions, feel pressure to conform to a perceived or imagined standard of Ukrainianness (Anderson 1991). Part of this conformity is a response to the demands of the market.

Visually, the band often attempts to present a Ukrainian appearance. In publicity photos, on their record albums, and at certain performances, the band dresses in Ukrainian embroidered shirts and blouses (in some cases combinations of hand embroidery and machine produced appliqués).[14] This visual presentation extends to the kinds of instruments they utilize on stage.

One of the focal points for the band in its early days, and, indeed the reason for its initial development, was the tsymbaly. It was Randy Kupka's interest and quick progress in learning the instrument that encouraged the rest of the family to perform music together. It was also this instrument, which is often recognized as a unique icon of Ukrainian identity (Klymasz 1972; Cherwick 1995), that connected the band to the musical traditions of previous generations of Ukrainians while at the same time giving them a unique identity when compared to other bands with more mainstream instrumentation. To further connect the group to the traditional Ukrainian sound, Shelly began playing the violin. This gave the group the archetypal set up of violin, tsymbaly and drums, along with the accordion and guitar.[15]

Another of the defining musical features of the group are Sylvia and Shelly's vocals. Both sing many Ukrainian folk songs, in Ukrainian, often together in two part

harmony. Their singing style is similar to that of the communal singing that takes place spontaneously at Ukrainian events, with a sound that focuses on the "grain of the voice." (Barthes 1990). it is also similar to the vocal quality on some of the recordings of Pavlo Humeniuk and of the early recording of Canadian prairie groups in the 1960s. The fact that they sing in the Ukrainian language is an important one for their audiences. In fact, Sylvia considers it the defining feature determining their Ukrainian identity.[16]

As the Kupka children have grown older and started families and careers of their own, the family band has experienced new pressures. The family has significantly increased the size of their farming operation. In addition, they also assist Gary in promoting his agricultural computer business. These factors, combined with obligations to their growing extended family, leave less free time for music performance. Nonetheless, the group continues to get together to perform, albeit less frequently. Their activity and their music remains, for many, a living example of the kind of old time, family based music making that was once a mainstay of the Ukrainian rural community.

Plate 17: Polka Ramblers publicity photo in western costumes

Plate 18: Polka Ramblers publicity photo in Ukrainian costumes

Plate 19: Polka Ramblers in performance, Malanka, January, 1996. From left to right: Randy Kupka, Sylvia Kupka, Shelley Kupka. Photo by Brian Cherwick.

[1] I make the distinction between bands like Charka who have a family-like solidarity and other bands that consist of individual musicians hired by a leader or contractor. The well known Metro Radomsky Orchestra, a five-piece group, boasted over seventy different musicians who had been members during the groups history. Of these, only Radomsky himself was a constant (Metro Radomsky 1980, 1981). Of bands performing in Alberta during the 1990s, Trembita consisted of a small constant nucleus with a number of sidemen hired for individual engagements. For discussion of leader/sideman groups see MacLeod 1993.

[2] See Chapter 3 Contexts.

[3] Interview, George Paleniuk.

[4] Bill Yacey of Angel Audio Systems in Edmonton estimates that a five piece band would have to invest approximately $2500 to $3000 for equipment in order to provide an adequate level of sound reinforcement for audiences of up to 500 people.

[5] Both the Polkas Ramblers and Charka have logos which appear on their business cards, recordings and on professionally manufactured signs which they display on stage during performances.

[6] Edmonton based "Trubka" is among the first Ukrainian groups to have their own web-site (www.trubka.com).

[7] George Paleniuk, and Victor Ruduke of Charka and Ron Cahute of Burya all used this term.

[8] Drummer Gary Kupka occasionally cannot attend engagements due to business commitments. In these cases the drums are played by Rick Sliwkanich or by his brother Barry Sliwkanich, who is the drummer with Charka.

[9] While most bands were comprised solely of men, women, especially if related to other band members, were a more occurrence starting in the 1960s. For a similar pattern in other musical genres see Rosenberg (1985,367).

[10] A guest in the Kupka home was present at one of these informal music performances, and hired them to perform for a wedding anniversary dance.

[11] See Discography below.

[12] While George and Sylvia, Randy and Shelly are all involved in farming, Gary runs a his own business designing computer systems for farm operations.

[13] Kupka's comment refers to the fact that the family farm at Bittern Lake is outside of the Ukrainian bloc settlement of east-central Alberta.

[14] In other photographs, the band appears dressed in western style apparel, similar to that of country dance bands.

[15] See Recorded Example 22.

[16] See Recorded Example 23.

# Chapter 9. Meet The Ukrainian Beatles . . . Again . . . And Again

***Charka, Marketing Ukrainian Music***

In the world of popular music in the 1990s, it often appears that style is as important as substance. For all the money invested in creating music products, a significant portion of that is devoted to the packaging and promotion (Rappaport 1984, 17, 42, 56).

Charka is a group that is acutely aware of business practices and constantly looking for ways in which to promote themselves better. They consult with both experts and audiences to determine how they can repackage their product to make it more appealing. For some audiences they emphasize their musical abilities while for other customers ethnicity is a product to market (Costa 1995).

One example of packaging involves the group's recording "Love It or L'viv It." Considerable effort was taken in selecting locations for photographs, the kind of packaging, the design of the band's logo, and the title of the album. According to George Paleniuk,"It is the cover that sells a magazine, not what's inside." The careful planning has been beneficial. Charka has been able to sell their product in many markets that they had not imagined, many of which are not traditional markets for Ukrainian music. By staying in touch with current promotional trends, Charka has been able to function more successfully as a band.

***1995***

"If 1964 is remembered as the year a mass market discovered the Beatles, then 1995 may well go down as the year the Beatles discovered mass marketing" (McCulley 1995, 26). The fall of 1995 saw a flurry of media attention surrounding the initial release of the "Beatles Anthology" packages, complete with the group's surviving members reuniting to record and promote "new" material. Coincidentally, 1995 also saw the reunion of two Ukrainian-Canadian dance bands, each claiming to

be the "Ukrainian Beatles." During the 1960s, the Winnipeg based D-Drifters-5 had performed and released an album of Ukrainian translations of the songs of the Beatles and other contemporary pop groups, while in the 1970s Rushnychok of Montreal gained popularity playing pop-tinged ethnic music. In 1995 both groups offered new products and returned to perform for their old audiences.

This chapter will address some of the conditions within the Ukrainian community in Canada which created the need for "Ukrainian Beatles," and will compare the way both groups mirrored the marketing strategies of the mainstream music industry in order to create both an identity and a market for their music.

***Beatles Anthology***

November 1995 saw the beginning of a strategic year-long blitz promoting a wide range of Beatles merchandise including home videos, music and video box sets, hard cover coffee table books, re-releases of the band's 13 studio albums on vinyl and appropriately logoed sportswear,"the most fearsome flood of product since the Beatle wig" (Giles 1995, 62). The cornerstone of this activity was the broadcast of a three-part, six-hour biographical documentary entitled *Anthology*, and three newly-compiled double-album collection of rare Beatle performances and studio outtakes. As predicted by popular music scholar Simon Frith (1988), multi-media marketing packages would become the standard to which all popular bands would now have to aspire. Once again, the Beatles would be setting popular music standards. However, the project's most anticipated elements were newly recorded songs which re-united the surviving Beatles with the voice of John Lennon based on a low-quality home cassette recording of a Lennon performance.

There was much speculation as to the motivation behind this reunion. While anticipated by Beatle fans since the band's initial break-up in 1970, the group had repeatedly refused to get back together for various artistic and legal reasons. George

Harrison was quoted saying that there would be no Beatle reunion "as long as John Lennon remains dead." Suggestions for this new change of heart ranged from the surviving band members wanting to tell their own definitive version of their story, to the speculation that Harrison and Ringo Starr "could use the money" (Corliss 1995).

This brings us to the question of the corresponding reunions of the "Ukrainian Beatles." What factors motivated these reunions? And who were these "Ukrainian Beatles"?

### *D-Drifters-5 in the 1960s*

The D-Drifters-5 began their career as a Ukrainian dance band, performing in traditional settings, at community dances, parties for youth organizations and at weddings. Their repertoire consisted primarily of old time polkas and waltzes along with some current rock and country hits. Their greatest fame came after they signed on as back-up musicians for the popular singing duo Mickey and Bunny, with whom they performed concerts across North America, and produced a number of long play recordings. Besides providing accompaniment for the singing duo, the group was featured in segments where they performed traditional folk songs, and dance melodies. When not on concert tours, the band continued to perform at local dances.

### *Ukrainian Beatles*

One of the main performance settings for the D-Drifters-5 during the 1960s were youth dances held at high schools, community clubs, and church halls. While many of these dances were for Ukrainian youth organizations, allowing the band to perform much of their usual Ukrainian repertoire, they often also performed for non-Ukrainian audiences. Consequently, the band had to be able to play hits from the popular music charts of the time. This included pieces by the various "British Invasion" groups such as the Beatles, the Searchers, and the Dave Clark Five. The

ability to play this kind of repertoire lead the band to a recording project that was most unusual for the time.

Between 1964 and 1966 the D-Drifters-5 recorded six albums as back-up musicians for Mickey and Bunny featuring Ukrainian-English mixes of folk, country and gospel music as well as two albums of Ukrainian and translated English Christmas carols. They also recorded albums of their own music, two featuring polkas and waltzes and one highlighting music for traditional Ukrainian folk dances. While the folk dance album became their most popular seller, perhaps due in part to the level of Ukrainian folk dance activity in Western Canada, their next project garnered them the most attention and a unique place in the field of Ukrainian music.

Following in the footsteps of Mickey and Bunny, the D-Drifters-5 translated a number of English rock songs into Ukrainian and released them on an album entitled "The D-Drifters-5 Sing and Play Beatles Songs and Other Tops English Hits in Ukrainian." Many of the translations were somewhat clumsier than those in the Mickey and Bunny repertoire. However, because of the fact that this album was released within months of the English-language originals and that their overall sound captured much of the feel of those originals (despite the considerably lower production resources), the album was well received. It also provided an added element to the Mickey and Bunny concert shows.[1]

In addition to their regular featured spots performing polkas or comic folk songs, the band was now also billed as "The Ukrainian Beatles." Along with reproducing the sound of the Beatles music, the group began adopting some of the British group's visual imagery as well. Tony Roman, the group's lead guitarist, began wearing a "Beatle haircut." Mike Klym, the drummer, grew a beard similar to the one worn by Ringo Starr just prior to his joining the Beatles. And the D-Drifter wardrobe now included the collarless suits made famous by the "Fab Four." Even the

photography featured on their album cover was designed to project images that were more in tune with that of a contemporary pop group than a Ukrainian polka band.

After just over two years together, the D-Drifters-5 split with Mickey and Bunny as a result of financial disputes. The band recorded two more albums of folk song and polka music and continued to perform at Ukrainian events throughout western Canada. Soon after, they began to focus their repertoire more on non-Ukrainian pop material. They became a popular draw on the western Canadian club circuit (Hanna 1968), performed at many mainstream festivals and fairs, and were even featured entertainers in Las Vegas (Hanna 1969).

In 1972 the band made a decided move back to Ukrainian music, arranging and performing special material to accompany the Rusalka Ukrainian Dance Ensemble of Winnipeg. That same year the band enjoyed great success performing this material along with their own pop music on a tour of Scotland and England.[2] Soon after that tour the band broke up due to personal differences. The re-grouped several times throughout the 1970s and 80s with various combinations of original and new members.[3] Each re-grouping focused on one of the band's musical strengths, rock music in the late 1970s, country in the early 1980s, and then another return to Ukrainian and old time music.

***Meet the Ukrainian Beatles, Again***

By the late 1980s, the only original members remaining in the group were Dave and Tony Romanyshyn, who were once again performing on the Ukrainian wedding and dance circuit. Dave Romanyshyn had become a successful recording studio owner and record producer in Winnipeg, and since he was the driving force behind this version of the group, he re-named it "The Dave Roman Band." After several years, however, he found that the public still referred to the group as "The D-

Drifters," partly due to the fact that they performed a similar repertoire. In 1991, he decided to return to using that name.

Upon hearing the D-Drifters name again, some organizers of large scale Ukrainian community events (most notably the *Zabava 100* celebration held in Winnipeg to mark the centennial of Ukrainian immigration to Canada) became interested in booking the group. However, promoters and audiences were expecting to see all four of the band's original members. Roman was able to convince violinist Yogi Klos to return, but drummer and comedian Mike Klym refused. He felt that the group's time had passed and that they could not re-create the successes they enjoyed in their prime saying "I'll rejoin when John Lennon rejoins the Beatles" (Lennon having died eleven years earlier).

With three quarters of his original group together, Roman began working on a recording of new material.[4] With the new recording completed, 1995 became the year to reintroduce the D-Drifters to the Ukrainian community.

As they had done earlier with Mickey and Bunny, the band chose a number of high profile public performances as a way of promoting their new product. This included appearances at Ukrainian festivals in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan and at Canada's National Ukrainian Festival in Dauphin, Manitoba. In their stage shows the band included many of the most popular numbers from their past recordings including a medley of their "Ukrainian Rock 'n' Roll."[5] These performances attracted the attention of an Alberta promoter, Ken Huculak, who proposed a series of shows similar to their tours of the 1960s, albeit on a somewhat smaller scale.

Since the D-Drifters were based in Winnipeg, Alberta audiences were unaware of their more recent activity. Huculak used this as a promotional tool. The advertisements for his shows announced "THE D-DRIFTERS-5 ARE BACK!" and "THE D-DRIFTERS-5 COME ALIVE IN '95!" (implying the band had been dead, or at least dormant prior to this).[6] He even included the number "5" in the band's name,

although they themselves had stopped using it in the late 1960s. Posters featured photos of only the original three members of the group (although the full group was a five-piece band). And, somewhat by chance, this series of shows happened to coincide with the publicity surrounding the release of the Beatles "Anthology."

The projects enjoyed several parallels, advertising that focused on the "reunion" of groups initially popular in the 1960s; visual images focusing on the current original band members;[7] and release of the first "new" recordings in 25 years, together with the re-release of old material. In reality, the members of the D-Drifters had worked together on many other recording projects, as had the members of the Beatles.

***The Other Ukrainian Beatles***

Coincidentally, 1995 saw the release of a video by another Ukrainian Canadian group claiming to be the "Ukrainian Beatles."

*Rushnychok* was a four-piece Ukrainian dance band formed in Montreal in 1969. The group members were all children of the third wave, post-war immigration and were raised in an urban environment in eastern Canada. Consequently, they had a different aesthetic view of Ukrainian culture than the D-Drifters, who were products of the earlier immigration to the Prairies.

The music that Rushnychok played, while geared toward a more urban audience, consisted chiefly of polkas and waltzes, and also included Ukrainian songs set to ballroom dance rhythms, tangos, rhumbas and fox trots, as well as their own brand of "Ukrainian rock." This mostly consisted of Ukrainian folk songs or contemporary compositions set to a soft rock accompaniment. Although the band's name itself was inspired by the title of a contemporary Ukrainian pop song, none of this music bore much resemblance to that of the Beatles, or even to the pop material performed by the D-Drifters-5.

Unlike the D-Drifters-5, who made their livelihood solely from music, the members of Rushnychok were all involved in other careers, with music as a hobby. When the career paths of two of the members finally took them away from Montreal, rather than finding replacements, the group disbanded in 1981.

In 1991 they reunited for a single appearance at a Ukrainian resort in the Catskills Mountains of New York, and in 1993 got together again to perform at a Ukrainian wedding in Edmonton, Alberta. It was at this wedding that footage was shot for the subsequent video.[8]

The video attempts to make parallels between Rushnychok and the Beatles: four young men who joined together to make music; concert photos showing a stage set-up similar to that of the early Beatles; and a narration which goes as far as stating "Many simply referred to them as the Ukrainian Beatles."

***Conclusion***

While it was purely coincidence that 1995 saw the release of the Beatles "Anthology" and related merchandise, the D-Drifters recording and tour, and the Rushnychok video, it was a tremendously fortunate one for the later two groups. Both were able to play up their respective connections to the Beatles image, including corresponding reunions. In the end, however, all three projects shared very similar motivations, the desire to relive some of the glories of the past and to benefit from the sale of new (and some recycled) products to the audiences of the present.

D-DRIFTERS-5
SING AND PLAY BEATLE SONGS AND
OTHER TOP ENGLISH HITS IN UKRAINIAN
We have done our best with the translations and songs on this album and we hope that you will get as much enjoyment from listening to them as we did from recording them.
The D-Drifters-5

Plate 20 : D-Drifters Beatles Album cover, circa 1965. Note the beard and colarless suit on drummer Mike Klym (second from right), and the "Beatle" haircut on guitarist Tony Romanyshyn (extreme right). Used by permission.

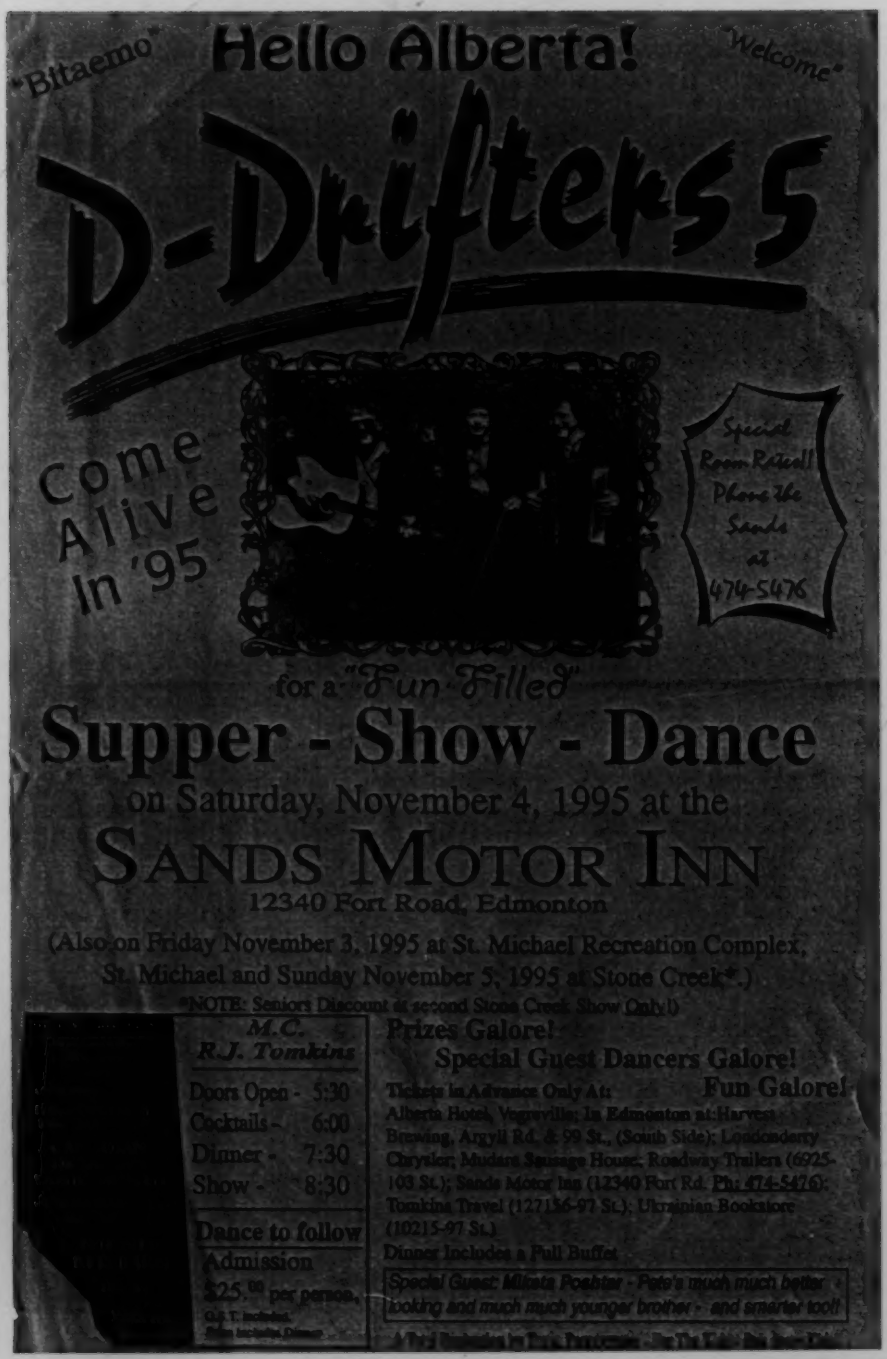
"Bitaemo"
Hello Alberta!
"Welcome"
D-Drifters 5
Come Alive In '95
Special Room Rates!! Phone the Sands at 474-5476
for a "Fun-Filled"
Supper - Show - Dance
on Saturday, November 4, 1995 at the
SANDS MOTOR INN
12340 Fort Road, Edmonton
(Also on Friday November 3, 1995 at St. Michael Recreation Complex, St. Michael and Sunday November 5, 1995 at Stone Creek*.)
*NOTE: Seniors Discount at second Stone Creek Show Only!)
M.C.
R.J. Tomkins
Doors Open - 5:30
Cocktails - 6:00
Dinner - 7:30
Show - 8:30
Dance to follow
Admission
$25.00 per person,
Prizes Galore!
Special Guest Dancers Galore!
Fun Galore!
Tickets in Advance Only At:
Alberta Hotel, Vegreville; In Edmonton at: Harvest Brewing, Argyll Rd. & 99 St., (South Side); Londonderry Chrysler; Mudart Sausage House; Roadway Trailers (6925-103 St.); Sands Motor Inn (12340 Fort Rd. Ph: 474-5476); Tomkins Travel (127136-97 St.); Ukrainian Bookstore (10215-97 St.)
Dinner Includes a Full Buffet
Special Guest: Milesta Poehter - Pete's much much better looking and much much younger brother - and smarter too!!

Plate 21: Poster for D-Drifters Alberta performances, November, 1995.

Plate 22: D-Drifters 1995 publicity photo. From left to right: Tony Romanyshyn, "Yogi" Klos, Dave Romanyshyn. Used by permission.

Plate 23: D-Drifters in performance. Edmonton, November, 1995. From left to right: Bill Zulak, Tony Romanyshyn, "Yogi" Klos, Dave Romanyshyn. Photo by Brian Cherwick.

[1] See Recorded Example 14.
[2] "Canadian Group Electrify With Pop." *The [Aberdeen] Press and Journal*, Saturday, August 11, 1973.
[3] "They do it 'cause they like it." *Dauphin Herald*, Wednesday, August 9, 1978.
[4] See Recorded Example 24.
[5] See Recorded Example 25.
[6] Huculak placed ads with these slogans in the "Coming Events" column of the *Edmonton Journal* Classified Section, Friday, September 8, 1995 and Friday, September 29, 1995.
[7] See photos of the surviving three Beatles in Giles, 1995.
[8] "Rushnychok:Ukrainian Music & Friends." Landrus Productions, 1995.

# Chapter 10. Charka, The Many Faces of Ukrainian Culture

***Ukrainian Community in the 1990s***

As the 1990s draw to a close, the Ukrainian community in western Canada continues to evolve. While there are an increasing number of sub-strata within the community, they inform each other to a much greater degree than in the past. The convergence of these disparate parts, along with the overwhelming effect of mainstream society have combined to create a unique form of Ukrainian culture that reflects both elements of both traditional and contemporary situations.

The history of Ukrainians in Canada has often been a study of the cultural contributions of each of the three major waves of immigration (Kaye and Swyripa 1982). While each subsequent immigration brought with it new cultural models, injecting fresh life into the community, each also arrived with their own social and political agendas, which often alienated them from the community established by members of the preceding immigrations. Since a period of over forty years has passed since the 1950s, when the last significant new immigration of Ukrainians to Canada occurred, those already established groups have found an increasing number of opportunities to interact. Events such as the lobbying for recognition of ethnic groups within the structure of multiculturalism, the development of a Ukrainian bilingual education system, and the celebrations marking the millennium of Christianity in Ukraine and the centennial of Ukrainian settlement in Canada provided rallying points where the community could present a united face. At the same time, the increased role taken by Ukrainians in mainstream society and the influence of that culture have, in a way, worked to create a more uniform type of culture among Ukrainian Canadians. Contemporary musicians have at their disposal the full spectrum of musical material imported by several generations of immigrants, along with all the technical and structural innovations provided by the mainstream North American music industry.

By the 1990s, there had been considerable change in settlement and occupational patterns of Ukrainians on the prairies. While there was once an overrepresentation of

Ukrainians in agriculture, this has rapidly changed as Ukrainians move to the cities (Hartmann and Isajiw 1980). As a result, the gap between urban and rural culture is narrowing. Rural audiences have access to all of the media resources of their urban counterparts, while much of the activity of Ukrainians in the cities continues to be influenced by models connected with rural life. Old village folk songs and dance tunes are reinterpreted by urban musicians, and often repackaged for consumption by both rural and urban audiences

The location of Ukrainians in the rural bloc settlements of the Canadian prairies, while an excellent environment for maintaining traditional customs and practices, also led to a degree of isolation. This became more evident following the Second World War, when new immigrants began settling in the urban centres of eastern Canada. A tension developed between the urban east and the rural west. By the 1990s, this tension was much less evident. Rapid transportation and mass communication have broken down most of the barriers that once existed. As shown by the cross-pollination effect of musicians like Burya, western and eastern tastes are becoming more similar.

A further influence on the Ukrainian Canadian community of the 1990s has been the increased interaction with Ukrainian communities in eastern Europe. Since 1988, there has been an increased flow of new immigrants from Ukraine, Poland and the former Yugoslavia. Ukraine's independence in 1991 has also lead to further exchanges of information and people, including music and musicians.

As the community itself begins to resemble the mainstream more closely, what is perceived as Ukrainian music also becomes more homogenous. In the musical choices available to listening audiences there are fewer of the aforementioned tensions, east/west, rural/urban etc. While distinctions remain in the music produced, audiences are more willing to accept alternatives. This is reflected in the wider range of choices available. For example, the 1998 Yevshan Catalog has its music selections grouped into eighteen different categories.[1] Technology has made it possible for almost anyone to produce a recording

with minimal production costs. Obviously, these lower budget productions do not meet to the level of more highly financed and elaborate productions, and more discerning consumers will avoid them.

While all these variables have an effect on the nature of the contemporary Ukrainian community, perhaps the strongest connecting thread is a desire for association with some concept of Ukrainianness. Fredric Jameson (1989) describes a "nostalgia for the present," where individuals long for a world that never really existed, and therefore is not there for the losing. Abrahams continues this pattern of thought, suggesting that as the population in rural areas decreases,"the very notion of the country and its agrarian past becomes suffused with these nostalgic meanings" (1994, 83). This kind of nostalgia has two aspects for contemporary urban Ukrainian Canadians. Firstly, there is nostalgia for the rural life of Ukrainian village peasants as perpetuated in the texts of folksongs. This often represents a nostalgia for a way of life that many have never even come into contact with, let alone experienced. Secondly, there is the nostalgia for the rural life of the early Ukrainian immigrants to Canada, often the predecessors of the current generations. Again, with many Ukrainians moving to urban environments several decades ago, there are a number of generations who have only nostalgic connections to the rural legacy that Ukrainians have established in Canada.

An interest in elements of traditional Ukrainian culture continues to extend through all strata of the Ukrainian community in Canada and is present at various levels of intensity. While a small portion of the population still follow the pattern that Novak outlines for traditional ethnic groups (speaking in a foreign language; living in a subculture; living in a "tight knit" ethnic neighborhood; belonging to organizations; responding to "ethnic" appeals; exalting one's own nationality or culture (1979a, 17)), a larger portion of the Ukrainian community are what George Paleniuk calls "Ukrainians with an asterisk." By this he means people who recognize some connection to Ukrainian culture, but have limited involvement in Ukrainian community life. While almost fully immersed in the patterns of

mainstream culture, they have retained visible symbols of Ukrainian identity such as Ukrainian food or participation in Ukrainian arts such as Ukrainian stage dance, the writing of pysanky [Easter eggs], and an enjoyment of Ukrainian music (Isajiw 1984, 123). They are not unlike what Novak refers to as "Saturday Ethnics" (Novak 1971, 31). Glazer (1980) offers an explanation for this interest in Ukraine and things Ukrainian suggesting that most ethnic groups that are small in relation to the host society will have a greater attachment to the fate of their homeland and a greater concern for cultural survival in a multi-ethnic society.

### *Charka Reflects the 90s Community*

In many ways, Charka is a microcosm of the western Canadian Ukrainian community in the 1990s. Structurally, the group is a combination of individuals that represent the values of each wave of Ukrainian immigration to Canada, including the recent post-Soviet wave. Their activity as a band also represents a blend of traditional and mainstream culture. The group members take their own individual interpretations of Ukrainian culture, based on their diverse backgrounds, and blend them to create a single, multi-faceted model.

### *Charka's Motivation*

When Charka first began its activity as a band, its principal motivation was the presentation and development of Ukrainian culture through music. The group put considerable effort into researching and selecting material that would both entertain and educate their audiences. The group perceived several voids that were being left by other bands working in the community and strove to fill those voids. At the same time, they were determined to make their music accessible to any of the several sub-groups within the Ukrainian community.

After performing for just over four years, there is a paradox in the group's current activity. While development of Ukrainian music and service to the Ukrainian community was at the forefront of the band's original motivations, the group is currently often forced to perform material that is not Ukrainian. This is not perceived negatively by the band. Rather, they feel that the fact that they are called upon to perform non-Ukrainian material reflects their versatility as musicians. Indeed, their outlook on the business of music within the Ukrainian community has taken a different view. Where they once presented themselves primarily as Ukrainian musicians who were versatile enough to play a wide range of musical styles, they now tend to present themselves as versatile musicians, who also happen to be able to play a wide range of Ukrainian music. In doing so, they have been able to capture a greater share of the market among audiences with minimal connection to the Ukrainian community, the "Ukrainians with an asterisk." At the same time, the contacts they formed within the highly organized and culturally active portion of the Ukrainian community continue to allow them to function as an "authentic" Ukrainian band.

***Questions of Authenticity***

Repertoire plays an important part in helping to establish Charka's authenticity. George Paleniuk is proud of the fact that the band carefully selects repertoire that is considered "authentic" Ukrainian music. He is critical of other groups that select pieces indeterminately, presenting them as Ukrainian without regard for their origin. He points to the large body of Czech, Slovenian and Polish polkas which form the main body of repertoire of the mid-western and eastern US polka styles and which have crept into the repertoires of polka bands across North America (Greene 1992; Keil 1982, 1992). While admiring the quality of this music, he feels that local Ukrainian groups do a disservice to the community by erroneously presenting these pieces as Ukrainian. Often when such pieces are performed or even recorded the musicians are unaware of their original sources. Many are also unaware of the actual song titles or the composers of the pieces, having learned them aurally from other musicians. Consequently, these pieces, along with

traditional Ukrainian melodies, are often renamed, sometimes with generic titles reflecting the names of the local band, its performers, or the main instrument featured (for example,"Rambler's Polka,"[2] "Ernie's Polka,"[3] or Saxy Polka[4]).

The fact that many pieces have appeared on locally produced commercial recordings under new names adds to the confusion regarding their origin. Some local musicians, such as the members of Charka, and especially Paleniuk, have taken time to try to link the pieces they have chosen to perform with some Ukrainian source. This is not always completely successful due to the process whereby a composed piece of music re-enters the realm of the folk. One example is a piece that is popular with many Ukrainian bands in Alberta, most often referred to as "Oi Handziu Liuba" or "Handzia." Not only is this piece often performed in dance situations, it has also been recorded several times.[5] The lyrics to this piece are in Ukrainian, which lead many of the musicians performing it to believe that it is of Ukrainian origin. However, the text was composed in Canada, with the North American idiomatic version of the word for automobile (*gara*, as in the phrase "rozikhav *garom*, skydav cherevyky") underlining this fact. The liner notes to the recorded version by the D-Drifters-5 emphasizes that the piece is "a comedy song written by a Ukrainian in Canada about a girl named Handzia, who has left her lover."[6] A earlier recording of the piece appeared with a different set of Ukrainian lyrics under the title "Julida Polka."[7]This version points directly to the original source of the piece,"My Girlfriend Julida" which was a hit record for Polish-American bandleader Walt Solek in 1948 (Greene 1992, 199). Solek's recording was part of the polka craze that swept popular music in the mid to late 1940s.

**"Handzia" Version A, as performed by the D-Drifters-5,"Sing and play Traditional and original Songs" V Records VLP 3050.**

Ой Гандзю люба, ой Гандзю мила
Чому ж ти мене самого лишила?
Вернись до мене, забудь за других,
Ой Гандзю люба, ой Гандзю мила.

Oh Handzia my loved one, Handzia my darling
Why have you left me all alone?
Return to me, forget about all others,
Oh Handzia my loved one, Handzia my darling.

Розїхав гаром, скидав черевики,
Не раз від батька набрав мотики.
Йшов спати пізно, ставав я рано,
Щобн не було то всью за дармо.

I drove around by car, I took off my shoes
More than once did I take a beating from my Dad
I went to bed late and got up early
So that this would not be for nothing

Ой Гандзю люба, запам'ятайся,
Іди найскорше, до мене вертайся.
Жити без тебе зовсім не можу
Ой Гандзю люба я тебе прошу.

Oh Handzia my loved one, remember
Come as quickly as possible, return to me.
I can't live without you
Oh Handzia my loved one, I'm begging you.

**Version B as performed by Mickey & Bunny,"Ukrainian Country Music" V Records VLP 3001.**

Джулайда, Джулайда ти люба моя.
Як гроші маю тебе кохаю.
Як всі розпустим, ідеш ти з другим
Я сам си лишу, сумний тут сиджу

Julaida, Julaida you are my loved one.
When I have money, I have you to love
When we spend it all, you go with another
I'm left all alone, I sit here sadly.

Джулайда, Джулайда ти люба моя.
Ой що моргає, ти з ним гуляєш
Ти ще не знаєш, кого кохаєш
Я сам си лишу, сумний тут сиджу

Julaida, Julaida you are my loved one.
If someone winks at you, you dance with him.
You still don't know who it is you love
I'm left all alone, I sit here sadly.

**Version C, as performed by the D-Drifters-5,"On Tour" V Records VLP 3006**

I have a girlfriend she is a honey
She only loves me when I have money.
When I am busted, she is disgusted.
She goes with Tony and I'm so lonely.

I have a girlfriend she is a dandy.
She keeps me broke, but I'm always handy.
I drink my soda, she drinks ginger cola.
I dance the polka, she does the hula.

The alternate naming of individual pieces is rarely a deliberate action on the part of local musicians. It is most often due to pieces circulating among musicians, often with little awareness of their origins. If musicians observe that a particular song elicits a positive response among audiences when performed by another group, they may strive to incorporate such pieces into their own repertoires. Many of the pieces that were standards of the American polka craze have also become standards in the Alberta Ukrainian scene. Because they have been a part of the local repertoire for such a long time, and perhaps because younger musicians learned these pieces from older musicians, it is often assumed that they are Ukrainian in origin, especially if they have an accompanying text that is sung in Ukrainian. A majority of these local musicians rarely use the Ukrainian language in conversation, and many do not speak any Ukrainian at all. Ukrainian texts are learned phonetically, and macaronic devices are simply recognized as components of the local language. As George Paleniuk observes, for these "Ukrainians with an asterisk," Ukrainian is one component of their identity which can be put on and removed as necessary.

Charka views the package of Ukrainian music they have arranged based on musical material of both previous and current generations as authentic. According to Lipsitz (1990), the production of popular music (or in the case of Charka, popular Ukrainian music) involves a continual "dialogue with the past."[8] This process involves not only "how artists use and combine elements of previous musical styles, but in the way in which the production practices themselves contain residues of previous 'modes' of producing and composing popular music" (Negus 1992, 89). Part of Charka's goal is to also convince their audiences that their music and the way it is presented is authentic. As Negus states,

> "Each emerging genre posits its own conventions of authenticity, which at the same time exposes previous conventions . . . But within these conventions is the 'authentic' relationship - the shared sense of being - which is articulated between artist and audience." (1992, 77)

In planning and preparing the artistic and business directions his group will take, George Paleniuk uses contemporary models from the business, entertainment and sports worlds.

***Music as Sport***

As a young man, Paleniuk was very active in organized sports. He attended the University of Manitoba on a football scholarship, where he was known as "The Ukrainian Greyhound." He also played hockey and broomball at a highly competitive level. Since the end of his playing career, he has traveled extensively as a coach and clinician. Paleniuk's view of his band and of the music community in general is often connected to images and patterns taken from the sports world. To him, Charka is a team, and he views himself a team coach or manager. Each member of his team has a specific role to play, with the goal of creating a total that is greater than the sum of its parts.

For Paleniuk, rehearsals and performances are much the same as practices and games. When Charka gathers to rehearse, it is either after a lengthy lay-off, like a "training camp," or to learn new material. Many times, the material attempted in rehearsal does not reach a polished state. Paleniuk compares this to the process whereby new plays are added to a football playbook. While a coach may sometimes "run a play in practice and it doesn't quite work, but you have faith it will click," the band is confident that new repertoire will come together in a performance situation. Like a team, the group relies on the extra energy and adrenaline produced in front of an audience to take their presentation to its highest level.

In the spring of 1996, the Vohon Dance Ensemble, a local Edmonton dance group, organized a festival of Ukrainian culture. The event featured displays and exhibits, food and beverage services, and continuous entertainment by local dance groups and musicians. The event ended with a large dance, with music provided by three Ukrainian bands,"Trembita," "Trubka" and "Charka." These three groups were among the most

popular in Edmonton at that time. The event was extremely successful, with a large crowd attending.

Throughout the event, there was an atmosphere of competition among the bands. While the groups were friendly with one another and co-operative in sorting out technical details, each was conscious of presenting their best possible face before such a large audience. Open community events of this nature are often a showcase for bands, with the audiences holding many potential future customers. It is at such events that contacts are often made for future engagements at weddings and anniversary dances. As a result, it was in the interest of each group to perform at its best.

While Charka was well received at this event, Paleniuk was not completely satisfied with the group's performance. He likened the presentations of his band and the other two to different styles of boxers. He viewed Trembita as a "classic jabber." By this he meant that they had all the necessary technical skills, yet lacked some of the energy or imagination to really take over the crowd. Trubka was compared to a "knock out puncher." He felt that this group was over-energetic, always going for the big blow, but lacking somewhat in pacing. He felt that his group's presentation struck a balance between these approaches.

One of the standards by which Ukrainian community dances or "zabavas" are often measured is the dance known as the "kolomyika."[9] In recent years, the kolomyika has evolved from a specific social dance performed by couples into a grand scale performance activity (Nahachewsky 1990). While a majority of the audience present in the hall forms a large circle, various individual dancers or groups of dancers enter the centre of the circle to perform intricate "solos." These often consist of steps taken from the choreography of dance ensembles, of which these "soloists" are often members. Here too a spirit of friendly competition exists, with each soloist or team trying to out do the previous.

Several factors combine to determine the success of a kolomyika. The presence of dancers willing to perform solos is certainly a consideration. If members of more than one dance ensemble are present at an event, the sense of competition is heightened. The

physical possibilities or limitations of the venue are also important. While a hall must be big enough to accommodate solo dancing, and provide room for others to observe, if a room is too large, the intimacy of the event is lost. And certainly one of the most important variables is the music the band performs for the kolomyika.

The triple bandstand at the Vohon Spring Festival was unique in that it attempted to have all three bands provide music for the kolomyika. Since the event was held in a full sized hockey arena and a spacious stage had been constructed to accommodate performances by dance ensembles earlier in the day, there was ample room for all three groups to have their equipment set up at the same time. Each band was assigned a position in the course of the kolomyika. As one group neared the end of their allotted time, the next prepared to begin. Thus, a relatively seamless transition from band to band took place, with the dancers barely missing a step.

Paleniuk felt that Charka's portion of the kolomyika was the weakest part of their performance that evening. He called their arrangement a "journeyman" kolomyika. In sports, journeymen are players who, while competent enough to participate professionally, are not particularly noteworthy.[10] He noted that a part of the flaw in their performance was due to a breakdown in teamwork. While the band usually works together, with parts in their musical arrangements designed to be distributed evenly among all members, Paleniuk felt that the usual balance was disrupted in this kolomyika. As a result, the responsibility for sustaining the energy level necessary to drive the dancers was left to only a few of the musicians. Paleniuk's review and analysis of each performance is not unlike that of a coach. He weighs both the strengths and weaknesses of each performance, then sets a game plan for future improvement.

***Music as Business***

Another strategy that Paleniuk uses draws on his experience as a businessman. Paleniuk has a background in sales. It is some measure of his success in this field that he was able to secure three engagements, complete with cash deposits, prior to actually having

a band. It was on the strength of his vision of what the band would be like and his ability to sell that vision that he was able to convince customers to hire his would-be group.

Many of the decisions Charka makes are also based on market research. Each member of the group is tuned into various kinds of audiences, rural, urban, immigrant, youth. Through their understanding of these markets, and their contacts with other individuals within them, they are able to identify repertoire they should perform and events where they should obtain bookings.[11]

When preparing to record their first album "Love It or Lviv It," Paleniuk consulted with experts from the provincial government's Department of Culture, Record Industry Division. Charka was advised that to reach the widest possible audience they should design their recording to address four types of potential audience, soft seat, meaning a concert audience within a theatre; hard seat, a concert audience at an outdoor festival; Zabava, the kind of crowd that dances to Charka's music; and studio, those who buy a recording to listen to for its intrinsic value. Charka was satisfied that the material they had selected met the needs of all four audiences.[12]

Producing a recording was one of Charka's wisest business moves. Prior to the album's release the group secured engagements purely by word of mouth or through individual band members' contacts within the community. The recording gave the group instant credibility and a face beyond the Edmonton market. Radio airplay of some of the album cuts introduced the band's music to new audiences. The recording has also been an effective promotional tool for securing new jobs. The disc was eventually picked up for distribution by Yevshan Corporation of Montreal, and has led to the band being hired for events other than dances, occasionally outside of the Edmonton market. The group is currently pursuing engagements across North America.

At engagements, the band is at work even when on breaks from performing. During pauses, they visit with members of the audience, soliciting opinions and drumming up potential new business. As MacLeod noted in his study of New York dance band

musicians,"Every party guest represents a future client and thus cannot be ignored." (1993, 92)

At certain events, Charka works on a principle that Paleniuk refers to as "Value Added." They feel that by providing customers with small additional services above those for which they were contracted, they will create a better atmosphere and increase their chances for future employment. Often at weddings, the band will do an extra performance at the entrance to the hall as the guests are arriving, at no additional cost to the hosts. Initially, they began doing this as an extension of the practice of past generations of Ukrainian musicians. In the traditional village setting, musicians escorted the bride and groom and their guests from their homes to the church and back, performing wedding "marches" along the way. When wedding receptions began to be held in community halls rather than in family homes, the musicians played the marches at the doorway as guests arrived. In recent years, few bands in the Edmonton area continue to play at the door. Charka saw an opportunity to connect with audiences familiar with this practice, while at the same time providing their employers with an additional value for their money. According to Paleniuk, the decision to play at the door was not only successful in terms of securing future business, but also helped solidify Charka's identity as a traditional Ukrainian band.

Like many commercial enterprises, Charka has a long range business plan. The group carefully balances the number of engagements they accept in various markets. They balance urban against rural locations, weddings against "events" (festivals, fund raising banquets, and other high profile engagements where they will be seen by a cross section of the community), Ukrainian against non-Ukrainian events. By carefully planning where and when they will perform, they are extending the life of their group. Overexposure in any one area can cause a saturation of a market. Charka has moved to different corners of this market, only to return later to old audiences with new material and a fresh presentation.

***Many Faces***

Charka's greatest strength is the diversity of experiences of its individual members and the way that that diversity comes together to create a single, yet versatile whole. Indeed, Charka is one group with many faces.

In developing their identity as a Ukrainian band, Charka has a wealth of resources to draw upon. Their individual members represent all four periods of Ukrainian immigration to Canada, the first, pre-war period (Wade), the second, inter-war period (Barry), the third, post-war period (George and Orest), and the most recent post-Soviet period (Victor). This break down gives them an insight into the tastes of each of these waves.

A second distribution within the group has to do with age. With an approximately 20 year span in age from the youngest to oldest members of the group (25-45) this also affects their range of experiences. This also puts them in touch with various genres of music and dance styles. This has proven most effective in helping Charka connect with diverse audiences. Through their internal interactions, they are able to perform material in a manner that can appeal to audiences of any age. This in itself is perhaps the single most important selling feature for any contemporary Ukrainian dance band in western Canada.

Charka is one of few urban bands that is able to bridge the gap between rural and urban communities. This is due, in part, to their careful reading of the tastes of rural audiences, and partly because of their own rural connections. Both Barry Sliwkanich and Wade Wasylciw have family ties in rural areas. Sliwkanich also lives and works in a rural community. As a result, he not only has personal connections to other individuals in rural locations, but is in tune with their tastes and values. He relates this information to the other members of his group, who in turn can prepare and present the kind of package that will appeal to organizers of rural events.

It is, in fact, community connections that have gone a long way in determining the success of Charka. Prior to their coming together as a band, each individual member was

involved at various levels within the Ukrainian community around Edmonton. Orest Pohoreski was involved with church and community organizations, and as a singer in the Ukrainian Male Chorus.[13] Barry Sliwkanich had been involved with community organizations and musical groups from a young age and is currently the director of one of the largest Ukrainian youth camps in the province of Alberta. Wade Wasylciw is active in the Ukrainian dancing community and in the Ukrainian Students Club at the University of Alberta. And Victor Ruduke has been active as a *diak* [cantor] at several Ukrainian Orthodox parishes and as an organizer and participant in activities with emerging immigrant organizations.[14] Finally, George Paleniuk, after his prolonged absence from the Ukrainian community, returned with great enthusiasm. He has been instrumental in projects for the Ukrainian bilingual school system, the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village, and served as president of the Ukrainian Professional and Business Club of Edmonton. Through these many connections, the band was able to quickly establish itself as an important musical force in the Ukrainian community. Through their public appearances and recording, they have been able to build upon that already formidable base.

While Charka is but one among many talented Ukrainian bands performing in the Edmonton area, it is their unique combination of extra-musical attributes that makes them such an interesting study. Their multi-faceted structure and their unique approaches to designing and analyzing their activity as a band make them an exquisite example of musical processes in the Ukrainian community in the 1990s.

Plate 25: Charka, publicity photo, 1995. Used by permission.

Plate 25: Charka in performance. Clockwise from upper left: George Paleniuk, Orest Pohoreski, Wade Wasylciw, Barry Sliwkanich, Victor Ruduke. Photos by Brian Cherwick.

[1] The 1998 Yevshan Catalog offers the following categories of music, Contemporary Music From Ukraine, Zabava, Burya, Female Vocalists, Male Vocalists, Contemporary Folk Ensembles, Instrumental, Ukrainian Folk Dance, Bandura, Classical, Choral, Liturgical, Records, Rock, Cassette Specials, Comedy, Country, Christmas.

[2] Polka Ramblers, "Ukrainian Style" Heritage Records HR-51. See Recorded Example 22.

[3] Nick Hnatiuk & the Fugitives, "In the Finest of Ukrainian Music & Song" Heritage Records HR-42.

[4] The Harmonizers, "Ukrainian Favourites by the Harmonizers" Heritage Records HR-44

[5] Mickey & Bunny "Ukrainian Country Music" V-Records VLP 1003; D-Drifters-5, "D-Drifters-5 Sing and Play Traditional & Original Ukrainian Songs" V-Records VLP 3050; Interlake Polka Kings "On Tour With the Interlake Polka Kings" UK Records UKLP - 5007; Eddie Chwill "I Can Still Hear Papa and Mama Singing" WAR Productions 4-880420. See Recorded Example 13.

[6] "D-Drifters-5 Sing and Play Traditional & Original Ukrainian Songs"

[7] Mickey & Bunny, "Ukrainian Country Music"

[8] Compare Recorded Examples 27 and 29 withthe subsequent versions by Charka in Recorded Examples 28 and 30.

[9] Nahachewsky refers to this type of dance as the "recent social kolomyika." (1991, 240)

[10] The Gage Canadian Dictionary defines journeyman as "a person who is a competent worker or performer but is not outstanding or brilliant."

[11] Charka has also attempted to work with promoters of other kinds of music. See "The Newest Band in Alberta, And They're Smokin!!!" 1996.

[12] See Recorded Examples 26, 28, 30, and 31.

[13] Orest's wife, Lesia, is also heavily involved in community activities, primarily as a former worker at Edmonton's Ukrainian Bookstore, and as conductor of Edmonton's SUMK Choir, the largest Ukrainian youth choir in the city.

[14] Victor is also a member of the band "Barvinok," and with this group he helped organize a fundraising concert in aid of victims of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster.

# Chapter 11. Conclusion

This study has attempted to show how the activity of a Ukrainian musical group of the 1990s, Charka, can provide a metaphor for the entire western Canadian Ukrainian community. The activity of these musicians addresses questions of identity, not only as Ukrainians, but as musicians and as citizens of a multi-faceted plural society. At the same time, I have attempted to illustrate how significant historical developments inform the choices made by contemporary musicians, and provide them with avenues from which to draw on previous traditions.

Henry Glassie has identified two main causes for the search for identity in traditions, erosion of mediating structures and a shift in society from creation to consumption (1994, 240). Certainly, the internal structures present in the Ukrainian community on the Canadian prairies have undergone considerable change since the end of the last century. In terms of music, the development of new genres of expression, such as commercial recordings, has put the responsibility for creation into the hands of a few specialists, leaving the bulk of the community as passive consumers (Klymasz 1970, 92).

Ukrainian Canadians have been socialized into the culture of the general society but have developed a symbolic relationship to the culture of their ancestors. An item from the cultural past, such as music, can become a symbol of ethnic identity. Music offers people access to a social world, a part in some sort of social narrative or what Finnegan (1990) calls "social pathways." The use of music can vary as to how important it is in defining one's social identity, in determining one's friendships, and in forming one's sense of self (Frith 1996, 90).

There is a process of selection for cultural items which are considered significant identifiers, such as musical genres or the instruments they are played on. Contemporary Ukrainian Canadians are often linked by new attributes that the original immigrants would not have recognized as identifying their group.[1] While some question whether ethnic

groups and their practices can be considered "authentic" in the diaspora (Radhakrishnan 1996, 203), the majority of Ukrainian Canadians continue to be unselfconsciously involved in a variety of elements of traditional Ukrainian culture. Often the processes of creating music rather than the music itself that provides individuals with sense of community.

Individual musicians or ensembles can serve as both a link to the cultural past and as catalysts for new ideas and cultural practices. Individuals or groups such as Pavlo Humeniuk, Mickey and Bunny, the D-Drifters, Rushnychok and Ron Cahute and Burya have all drawn on the wealth of material passed on by previous generations in order to create unique and dynamic new forms of expression. Because of the public nature of their activity, their reconstructions of the culture are often understood as accurate representations by individuals outside of the group.

There are Ukrainian Canadians who have gone through the process of socialization within Canadian mainstream society rather than the ethnic subsociety, who may not share the culture with their ancestors or contemporaries within the subsociety, but who nevertheless may have retained or even developed to a higher degree subjective "Ukrainian" identity. These individuals, whom George Paleniuk refers to as "Ukrainians with an asterisk" or "outer limits Ukrainians," are increasingly coming in from the periphery. As inter-ethnic marriages increase, so does the proportion of the population with mixed ancestries, causing a blurring of ethnic boundaries (Krotki and Odynak 1990, 416). As music continues to provide this group with one of few remaining avenues of access to Ukrainian culture, their tastes and expectations are having an effect on the activity of Ukrainian musicians. To address this condition, musicians appropriate cultural information from the surrounding society, and use it as components of the reconstructed ethnic culture, while at the same time, some elements of ethnic culture are appropriated by the surrounding society. Media and popular culture help people gain and consolidate a sense of identity (Berger 1996, 224).

While music provides signifying points which help connect the Ukrainian community, it also works to create an internal community among musicians. This community can be looked upon as its own subculture, complete with rituals and codes which are understood by its members. Paradoxically, while each musical group is striving to create its own unique identity that will distinguish it from its competitors, many of the individual musicians stressed that they are all doing about the same thing, the only difference being that some do it better than others (cf. MacLeod 1993, 63).[2]

A significant role in the creation of cultural identity has been played by sound recordings. Since their first appearance in the 1920s, they have aided in bridging the geographical barriers that separate Ukrainians across North America. Not only have they aided in informing Ukrainians of significant trends, but they have often been the vehicles for establishing and developing those trends. The actual aural sounds contained in recordings along with the notes, photographs and modes of packing that deliver them all go together to create an artificial community. Sound recordings have also provided a window into the Ukrainian community for those from outside the tradition.

The role of music as an important part of community celebrations has allowed it to create bridges across various boundaries within the community. At one time economic class or period of immigration of an individual was a source of tension, with cultural items of one group spurned by another. The Ukrainian music of the 1990s has developed into a form of popular music that transcends boundaries. As specific internal structures break down, music remains to provide a unifying force, connecting elements within the community and providing a face to the outside, working to dispel elitists attitudes toward culture (Berger 1996, 25).

While Ukrainian music has continued to be a central component of Ukrainian culture throughout the period of settlement in Canada, the degree to which it is embraced has fluctuated. The 1990s have seen the convergence of a number of disparate elements (celebration of Ukrainian settlement to Canada; independence of Ukraine; rise in popularity

of 'World Musics'; increased access for individuals to multi-media technology) that created an atmosphere that was conducive to embracing Ukrainian music. Perhaps it once again has become fashionable to be an ethnic,"to posses "soul," to have an authentic identity, and to be mentally healthy" (Stein and Hill 1977, 5).

It may seem strange that in this study of the effect of music on the Ukrainian community, there has been little discussion of actual music itself. I have done this quite deliberately. While a detailed musical analysis of some of the genres under discussion might reveal some further insights, it would also reveal many redundancies. I have tried to point out the way in which similar musical material has persistently played an important role in the lives of Ukrainians. It is largely the processes involved in creating and packaging of this material that has differed throughout time, leading to unique innovations. Ukrainian musicians continue to rely on the same pool of resources, simply because it is what the majority of their audiences have come to expect from them.

Perhaps the most fascinating aspect of this study is the way that so many apparently disparate components of Ukrainian culture in Canada, separated by factors of time, space, and class remain so inextricably linked. In the discussions with musicians that informed this study, the connections were a constant source of amazement for both them and myself. This only strengthened the belief that music really is a fundamental component of culture, informing Ukrainian Canadians who they were, who they are, and who they are yet to become.

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[1] One such example would be the identification of *kovbasa* (garlic sausage), once simply an element of the diet of Ukrainians, as a Ukrainian symbol. For discussion of symbols such as these see Isajiw 1984 and Pohorecky 1984.

[2] A sentiment shared by Ron Cahute, and by the members of Charka.

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Cahute, Ron
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Groshak, Alex
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Klym, Katherine
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Klym, Mike
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Kupka, Randy
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Laskowski, John
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Pohoreski, Orest
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Romanyshyn, Dave
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## Performances

Charka
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Rehearsal, recorded by Brian Cherwick, Sherwood Park, AB, April 30, 1996.
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D-Drifters
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Polka Ramblers
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## Discography

### Pavlo Humeniuk

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